SHE THINKS FOR HERSELF.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

" Though plung'd in ills, and exercis'd in care,
" Yet never let the noble mind despair :
" When prest by dangers, and beset by foes,
" The gods their timely succour interpose ;
" And when our virtue sinks, o'erwhelm'd with grief,
" By unforeseen expedients bring relief."

PHILIPS.

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SHE THINKS FOR HERSELF.

CHAP. I.

"With courtship pleas'd, of silly toasters
"proud,
"Fond of a train, and happy in a crowd;
"On each poor fool bestowing some kind
"glance,
"Each conquest owing to some loose advance."

LADY M. W. MONTAGUE.

WHEN Frederic Unwin reach[…] Lombard Street, he found Mr. Mordaunt alone; who, upon his entrance, shook him heartily by the hand, and

s his wife and daugh-
te[illegible] thelmstone, he must
conte[illegible] h bachelor's fare, in-
vited him to [illegible] t by the fire; stirring it
at the same time. He then, with good
humoured hospitality, rang the bell and
ordered tea, saying that he was sure
Frederic would be glad of some re-
freshment. The cordiality of this re-
ception could not but be grateful to the
person on whom it was bestowed, who,
before the end of the evening, had
formed a very high idea of his future
partner.

Mr. Mordaunt was a man of business,
possessed of plain sense and a benevo-
lent heart; but none of these qualifica-
tions pleased his daughter, to whom we
shall soon introduce the reader: she
[illegible], in vain, used her utmost endea-
vours to render him a man of fashion.
Lombard-street, too, was her aversion,
but her father was inexorable to her

wish of removing to the west end of the town.

When tea was over, (which Mr. Mordaunt made himself, saying that he hated to have it slopped out of the room,) he began to question Frederic about his family. "Upon my word," continued he, "I did not think that Mr. Raynsford had numbered such a respectable man as Mr. Unwin in the circle of his acquaintance. Perhaps you will wonder to hear me speak of him in such terms, as it was from his recommendation that I received you into the firm; but it was out of gratitude to his father, to whom I was once under great obligations, that I attended to his wishes in that respect. To old Mr. Raynsford I owe the means of acquiring every thing that I now possess. When my father, through misfortunes, was unable to settle me in business, he took that charge upon himself; nor was I

the only object of his benevolence: he was a truly good man; it is a thousand pities that his son has profited no better by his example. Yet, for my old patron's sake, I wish to oblige him when it is in my power; and, if I may judge from your looks, young man, I think that I shall not repent it in this instance."

Frederic bowed to the compliment, and then proceeded to talk of business, with his knowledge of which Mr. Mordaunt was perfectly satisfied.

Frederic's attachment to Miss Dudley had abated the natural fire of his character, and rendered him more amenable than before to the rules of prudence. His chief wish was to meet with her approbation, and this motive preserved him from many temptations which he would not otherwise have had fortitude to resist. So true, alas! it is, that a reward in this world has often

more influence upon the human mind, than that of which the duration shall be eternal, as the measure boundless! For Selina's sake Frederic applied himself with unremitting assiduity to business: his mornings were devoted to it, and the evenings were generally spent either *tête-à-tête* with Mr. Mordaunt, or with a select circle of his acquaintance. One night he had been prevailed upon to go with a party to the Theatre: they sat in the pit, as being most adapted to the purpose for which they came, viz. to see and hear the performance. An extraordinary chance brought Mr. Hervey, (the friend of Dorian,) to the same part of the house: he sat behind them, and hearing Frederic addressed by the name of Unwin, immediately changed his situation to have a better view of his person. Recognizing one of the gentlemen as a slight acquaintance, he entered into conversation with him,

and, at his own request, was introduced to Frederic. "I understand that you are from Heathdale, in Sussex," said Mr. Hervey; "it is a most delightful part of the country: I have frequently travelled through it with the most pleasureable sensations; and I am happy to meet with a gentleman, who, I doubt not, will partake of my sentiments. I am an enthusiastic admirer of the beauties of nature, and I know no place that exhibits them in greater perfection than the scenes around Heathdale." Gratified by hearing his native village spoken of so highly, Frederic expressed his entire coincidence in the opinion. The curtain now drew up, and all his attention was engrossed by the incomparable powers of some of the best performers of the age, in the tragedy of Macbeth.

Between the acts, Hervey made such judicious remarks, both upon the play

and the actors, and adapted them so much to the taste of his auditor, that Frederic was not a little pleased with his new acquaintance. When the curtain dropped, Hervey said, "Perhaps I flatter myself too much in thinking that there is a similarity in our opinions on which is often founded a permanent friendship. However that may be, I feel very unwilling that our acquaintance should end with this accidental meeting: may I hope to have the honour of seeing you at my lodgings in Suffolk-street?" at the same time presenting him with his address. Frederic, who had learned that he was a young man of large fortune, and universally admired, was flattered by this invitation, which he readily accepted. Upon his mentioning Hervey to Mr. Mordaunt, he said that he knew nothing of him, not having much acquaintance at that end of the town.

" But I have so good an opinion of you, young man," he added, " that, if you wish to cultivate an intimacy with him, I shall be glad to see him at my house."

Soon after this occurrence, Mrs. and Miss Mordaunt were driven from Brighton, by the chilling blasts of October, and constrained to revisit home. " How do you do, my dear Father," said Miss Mordaunt, as she entered the room, apparently without noticing Frederic. " Here we are; once more returned to odious Lombard-street! I declare the smoke of the city has quite killed me!" and she threw herself at full length upon the sofa, with an air of fashionable negligence. Mr. Mordaunt, after saluting his wife, introduced Frederic to her, as a young man whom she would find a very agreeable addition to their society. Mrs. Mordaunt received his compliments

with an air of inattention, and turned from him to give some orders to her woman. Her husband then said to his daughter, "Bab, you don't seem to have noticed that there was a stranger in the room: this is Mr. Unwin." "My dear papa!" returned she, "how often must I conjure you not to call me by that shocking appellation? surely Barbara sounds barbarous enough, without shortening it into that diminutive of baby! How do, Mr. Unwin," continued she, "I hope you will excuse my rising, for I am really *accablee* past all sufferance." "I should be sorry to put a fair lady to any inconvenience," replied he, smiling, "and beg that you will not disturb yourself." "O, for that matter, I never do; it is not my way," rejoined she, as she took a survey of his handsome face and fine figure: these happening to suit her taste, she set him down, in her own mind, as one

of her captives; for as he would be continually exposed to the influence of her charms, it would be preposterous to doubt of her success.

"I think though, Barbara," observed her father, "(since that, it seems, is the name which best suits your refined ears), that, notwithstanding your complaints of being killed, I never saw you look better in my life." At this speech Miss Mordaunt burst into a loud laugh. "Well, I protest," she exclaimed, "I never heard any thing more entertaining: so you really think, my wise papa, that you are to judge of my health by my looks! why, if I were dying I should *look* the same; for, like Pope's Narcissa, my last words would be, "And Betty, give this cheek a little red."

Frederic was surprised at her effrontery, of which, before he saw her, he had formed no adequate idea, and her

father looked angry, saying, "I wonder, Barbara, that you should so unblushingly avow the use of árt: a little natural bloom is worth all the meretricious beauty of the most finished *coquètte*." "Lord, what antiquated notions!" returned Miss Mordaunt. "For heaven's sake don't talk of *natural bloom*, unless you wish to present to my imagination the horrid idea of some aukward country cousin. Don't you abhor a milkmaidish appearance Mr. Unwin?" Frederic thought of Selina's lovely complexion, and, thus called upon, did not scruple to avow his opinion that the colours ot nature were superiour to those of art: though he allowed that when ill health or dissipation had deprived the cheeks of their native beauty, a little rouge was a considerable improvement. "A *little* rouge!" repeated Miss Mordaunt; "why a little rouge is worse than none; it seems as if

one were ashamed of using it. But you are just come out of the country, Mr. Unwin, and, perhaps, have vowed eternal constancy to some rural lass, 'whose red and white, Nature's own pure and cunning hand laid on:' a short residence in town will cure you of such Gothic ideas." Frederic presumed, with a smile, to question the truth of this assertion.

But the conversation now turning on their visit to Brighton, Miss Mordaunt said, "I should like prodigiously to be at a boarding-house, if they did not keep such horribly early hours. It would afford excellent amusement to quiz the strange mortals that are generally assembled in those receptacles for all descriptions of people, who can afford to pay for their entertainment. A lady of our acquaintance, who came to Brighton when it was so full that she could not get a private lodging,

was forced to take up her abode in one of them, and we had the felicity of drinking tea with her: such a set of oddities I never beheld! Among the rest were Sir Daniel Gooseskin, of the ward of Farringdon without, his fat lady, and hopeful eldest son; who, without one pretension to it, sets up for a fine gentleman. This fop I overheard, when we first went in, enquiring who I was, and receiving for answer, [illegible] only daughter of a rich merchant in London,' he replied, 'Then, by gad, she is just the thing for me.' Being willing to humour him in the supposition, I listened to his soft nothings with an air of confusion, as if he had been the first that ever greeted my ears with the language of flattery. Encouraged by my bashfulness, the gentleman proceeded to declare himself my ardent admirer; when, to his infinite surprise, I burst into laughter in his face, and

told him, loud enough for the whole room to hear, that I was grieved at his disappointment, but he must have something more than impudence to recommend him before he would be just the thing for the rich merchant's daughter. Lord, how foolish the man looked, and his lady mother turned purple with vexation at hearing her darling so cavalierly treated: both together they put me into such a convulsion of mirth, that I scarcely recovered it the whole evening." "You delight in mischief Barbara!" said Mrs. Mordaunt, with a look of exultation at her daughter's wit. "Not I, I assure you, madam," replied Miss Mordaunt, "I declare it cuts me to the heart when I think of the havoc which I have made among the male animals!"

Thus did she run on, till her mother, professing herself fatigued with her journey, retired to rest, and the family

separated to their respective apartments.

Frederic was thoroughly disgusted with Miss Mordaunt's behaviour, (though he could not but acknowledge that she was a fine woman,) and the comparison he made between her and Selina did not raise her in his opinion. The eager thirst for admiration and flattery, regardless whether it were accompanied by respect, the loud tones and assured manners of the one, were strongly contrasted by the self-possession of innate worth, the easy elegance, and native delicacy of the other: and his taste was too just, his sentiments too congenial to nature, even had he been uninfluenced by affection, not to decide in favour of Miss Dudley. The return of the ladies was the signal for dissipation to take up its abode in the house of Mr. Mordaunt; as the beauty, and above all, the large expectations of his

daughter attracted crowds of admirers. This was an enjoyment which was indispensable to Miss Mordaunt's vanity, and she was very liberal in the encouragement which she bestowed, though she did not intend to unite herself to any thing beneath a coronet. Yet great as her delight was in making new conquests, it was equalled by the pleasure which she took, when she had secured her influence, in disappointing the expectations that she had raised.

One morning that she had detained Frederic at home for the purpose of attending her to an auction, Mr. Fermor was announced. This gentleman was the eldest son of a brewer in very affluent circumstances, who, being blessed with a sufficient portion of self-conceit, flattered himself that he was high in the lady's good graces: this unfortunate morning, however, was destined to shew him his error. He took

Miss Mordaunt's hand with an air which denoted the certainty of a welcome reception, and was beginning to congratulate himself upon his felicity in finding her at home, when she turned from him with the utmost *hauteur*, telling her mother that she was astonished the servants knew no better than to let in people who interrupted her more agreeable engagements.

Poor Fermor looked quite crest-fallen, and asked in what he had been so unhappy as to offend her. "I did not say that you had offended me," retorted Miss Mordaunt; "but one is not always in a humour to be entertained with the impertinence of a fop any more than with the tricks of a monkey." "A monkey, madam!" repeated the affronted beau: "I profess that I am totally at a loss to comprehend your meaning!" "I am not bound to supply you with comprehension," replied

she; "nor did I ever give you credit for very acute discernment." "Upon my word, madam," cried Fermor, "this treatment is not to be borne! you have given me reason to suppose that you thought of me more favourably." "Nothing but your own vanity, you may depend upon it," she returned: "I would advise you, as a friend, not to listen, in future, to its suggestions." Fermor stormed. Miss Mordaunt laughed: saying "Don't put yourself in a passion, Mr. Fermor, don't put yourself in a passion! consider, you may break a blood vessel, and then the ill-natured world would say that I killed you! Mongo, my divine Mongo!" continued she to a little pug dog; "how I adore you!" Fermor, who was pacing the room with hasty strides, stopped before the sofa on which she was seated, and looked as if he were disposed to vent his rage on the petted object

of her caresses. She viewed him with the most provoking air of triumph; and then observed to Frederic that, as Mr. Fermor seemed in such a very amusing humour, she had no doubt her mother would be happy to stay at home for the pleasure of his company. "So if you please, Mr. Unwin," added she, "we will repair to the auction; or I shall be too late for those sweet jars which I have set my heart upon purchasing." "It is well, madam," cried Fermor, darting an angry glance at Frederic; "I now see for whom I am slighted." "I apprehend that I am not accountable to you for my conduct," replied Miss Mordaunt, (as Frederic was assisting her to put on her pelisse,) "but do sit down, good man; you will wear out the carpet if you trot backward and forward at such a furious rate!" This was quite too much for the gentleman's patience, and he flung out of the house,

vowing that he would never enter it again.

For some time after he was gone, Miss Mordaunt indulged herself in a violent fit of laughter; at length she said to Frederic, "Is not that a pretty fellow, to fancy that he has a right to be angry, even if I should have bestowed a preference where it is so justly due?" This was not the first hint which she had given of her favourable inclinations towards him, but he was far from wishing to profit by her kindness, and had studiously avoided paying her more attention than politeness demanded from an inmate in the same family. He answered that it was impossible for him to judge of the reasons which Mr. Fermor had to presume upon her good opinion: though he could hardly suppose that she had given him any, or she could not have treated him in the manner which he had wit-

nessed. "Oh, you savage!" returned she, "where would be the use of having such a number of fops about me, if I were not at liberty to divert myself with first flattering their vanity, and then laughing at their credulity? But my serious thoughts, I assure you, are better bestowed." This speech was accompanied by a look which he could not misunderstand, but which he would not appear to notice; and, opening the door, he said that he was ready to attend her. "Insensible!" muttered she, as she gave him her hand to lead her down the steps, and thoroughly out of humour at the ill success of her advances, she satirized every body and every thing at the auction; returning home without bidding for the sweet jars which she had set her heart upon purchasing.

Frederic had not omitted to avail himself of Mr. Hervey's invitation, and

the latter was not unmindful of Mr. Dorian's instructions. He moralized very gravely upon the vices of the age, professing his abhorrence of them, and illustrating his discourse with many anecdotes which his acquaintance with the great world enabled him to relate: then, turning the conversation upon subjects of literature, he displayed so general a knowledge of the Belles Lettres, that Frederic congratulated himself upon having formed a connexion which promised at once pleasure and utility. From Hervey's acquaintance with the town he thought that he would be able, and, from the friendship which he professed for him, he doubted not that he would be willing, to save him from the errors which he might fall into from inexperience; and he gave him a pressing invitation to visit him at Mr. Mordaunt's. Hervey said that there was nothing he more ardently de-

sired than the opportunity of frequently enjoying his society, he should, therefore, be happy to obtain an introduction into the house where he resided.

Frederic, upon his return home, mentioned his new friend in high terms of praise to Miss Mordaunt, begging that if he should call when he was out, she would have the goodness to entertain him till he was sent for. This she readily promised; for an acquaintance with such a young man as Hervey, whom she already knew by sight, was too desirable not to be looked forward to with pleasure. Soon after the morning of the auction, his carriage stopped at the door, and in consequence of Miss Mordaunt's message, having too much gallantry to refuse a lady's invitation, he alighted. She was alone; a most uncommon circumstance: but she was nursing a slight cold that she might

be able to bear the fatigues of the evening, when they were to have a large party. Upon Mr. Hervey's entrance she rose from a sofa, on which she was reclining in a studied attitude, and expressed much pleasure that her having been detained at home by indisposition had prevented his being disappointed of seeing Mr. Unwin.

Mr. Hervey, on hearing that she was unwell, insisted upon not disturbing her; nor would he take a seat till she resumed her former position. She then told him how highly Frederic had spoken in his praise, by whom, she was sure, she should never have been forgiven had she been so unfortunate as not to prevail upon him to wait his arrival. Hervey had too general a knowledge of the sex not to penetrate immediately into Miss Mordaunt's character: he saw that flattery could not

be too highly seasoned to suit her taste, and replied, "Who would not reckon hours for moments, when spent in such enchanting company. I must ever congratulate myself on the incident that has introduced me to a lady so universally admired." "The approbation of a gentleman of Mr. Hervey's acknowledged taste," she returned, "must be highly distinguishing to those on whom it is bestowed. I wish you could grace your friend with a little of your politeness: he is an absolute insensible, and, though he has been in the house with me this fortnight, pays me no more attention than if I were his grandmother." "I have had some hints given me," answered he, "that his affections are most unworthily engaged, and now I am convinced that the information must be true: no man whose heart is free can be insensible to your attractions:" and he kissed her hand, with

an air of more freedom than respect. Snatching it from him, she told him that he was very saucy, and was beginning to enquire the particulars of Mr. Unwin's engagement, when he was heard on the stairs: Hervey promised further information and enjoined secresy before he entered the room. Frederic looked the satisfaction which he expressed in Mr. Hervey's visit, and thanked Miss Mordaunt for her goodness in detaining him. "I am delighted," replied she, "in having been fortunate enough to please you; it is so uncommon a thing that it has all the charm of novelty. Do you know, Mr. Hervey, that this gentleman has volunteered the office of my preceptor, and takes upon him to give sidelong hints for my edification." Frederic laughingly denied having engaged in so arduous an undertaking; protesting that if she had applied to herself any of

his remarks it must have been more from consciousness on her side than design on his. Hervey rallied him upon his deficiency in gallantry; telling him that he must be quite steeled against the facinations of beauty to discover faults in Miss Mordaunt: then fixing his eyes upon her he repeated,

"If to her share some female errors fall,
"Look in her face and you'll forget them all."

The discourse now turning upon the present distressed state of a family once high in the mercantile world, Miss Mordaunt expressed herself in so unfeeling a manner, while she pretended to pity their misfortune, that Frederic could not help hinting the difference of his sentiments; and Hervey, not daring, in his presence, to say any thing in extenuation of her behaviour, turned the conversation into another channel.

Contriving, without lessening Frederic's good opinion, to render himself so agreeable to Miss Mordaunt that she insisted upon his staying dinner, and told him that she could not dispense with his company in the evening, if he had no other engagement.

Upon his accepting the invitation, she retired to dress, and the two friends were left together; when Frederic expressed his astonishment that Hervey, whose sentiments, he was certain, were wholly dissimilar to Miss Mordaunt's, could condescend to flatter her vanity, and suffer her to believe that he was charmed with her attractions.

"My dear sir," replied he, "you look upon this subject in too serious a light. Though I do not approve of Miss Mordaunt's manners, yet there is much to be excused in a woman, intoxicated with admiration; and were I to make her my enemy I should proba-

bly be deprived of many opportunities of enjoying your society." "The motive is too obliging for me to find fault with it," said Frederic, "but I own that I cannot be so accommodating. You have heard that there is to be a party this evening, and you will see her squandering sums at the gaming-table, which, properly employed, might diffuse joy and comfort among the children of penury. I have sometimes been amused with her vivacity; but, as I become more acquainted with her, I discover faults in her heart, for which no sprightliness of imagination, no personal charms can compensate." "You judge her very coolly," returned he; "and, I think, are a little ungrateful, for it is pretty evident she views you with partiality." "I do not feel myself much flattered," observed Frederic, "by a partiality which springs from a thirst of universal conquest; and its

being so evident does not make me more inclined to return it, or increase my opinion of the lady's delicacy." "Upon my word," answered Hervey, "there are few young men who could resist the advances of so fine a woman; particularly when the advantages of such an alliance are taken into consideration, for, I doubt not, if you managed adroitly, that you might carry off the prize." Frederic said, he earnestly hoped that he should never be reduced to the necessity of shackling himself for life with such a companion, and Hervey then professed a perfect coincidence of sentiment; declaring that what he had said was only with a view of calling forth his opinion.

Miss Mordaunt, at length, made her appearance, armed at all points for conquest: authorised by fashion, she was voluptuously attired in a dress so scanty, that it could scarcely be called

a covering, and made to fit her shape more exactly than modesty could warrant. There were several gentlemen at dinner, and the lady, by taking wine with them all, seemed resolved that the warmth of Bacchus should compensate for the deficient robes of Diana.

When the company was assembled in the evening, and the whist tables were filled, Miss M. asked Hervey and Frederic to join her in a party at commerce. "I thought you played Pharo?" said the former. "Never, at home," she replied; "Heavens! my very good father would be afraid of the house falling upon his head, if he suffered such wicked practices." Frederic declined her summons, saying that he had made an unalterable resolution never to touch a card for a greater sum than he could well afford to lose. "Oh, the prudent young man!" exclaimed she.

"I suppose his papa has told him that gaming is a deadly sin, with many other equally sage admonitions, and he is afraid of being called a naughty boy if he transgresses." "My father never gave me any precepts but what were so perfectly consonant to reason," answered he, "that I must be mad, as well as ungrateful for his kindness, if I neglected to follow them:" he then walked away to avoid further importunity.

"I shall never make any thing of him," observed Miss Mordaunt to Hervey; "but, now he is gone, I will give up the dear delight of the three aces to hear the particulars of his rustic amour."

They seated themselves upon a vacant sofa, and Hervey related the history of Frederic's engagement to Selina, as he had received it from Montague; describing her as an awkward

country girl, without either birth or fortune, whose beauty was her only recommendation. "It would be an act of kindness to him," he continued, "if you could disengage his affections from such a moppet, by making him sensible to your charms and very superior accomplishments." He added a request that she would give no hint to Frederic of his communications; as it would prevent his having any influence in other things, did he know his opinion on this subject.

The door now opened, and Mr. Selby was announced. "Oh, heaven and earth!" exclaimed Miss Mordaunt, "if there is not that horrid Goth, my mother's uncle! What, in the name of ill-fortune, could possess him to thrust his old fashioned person into so numerous an assembly? You cannot conceive how ill-natured he is! Be-

cause he is monstrous rich, and we are his nearest relations, he thinks that he is privileged to say any thing; and is always railing against the pleasures which he can no longer enjoy."

The gentleman in question advanced towards them, and all those who were disengaged from the card tables flocked round Miss Mordaunt to divert themselves with Mr. Selby's oddities. He was a short, thick, old man; dressed in a suit of claret-coloured velvet, long ruffles, and small, square, silver buckles in his shoes. "So niece," he began, "you will never be weary of turning your father's house into a den of thieves!" "Bless me, sir," replied she, "I'm sure if there are any here it is without my knowledge." "What do you call that motley assemblage who are picking one another's pockets at the card tables?" rejoined her

uncle, "one half of them deserve to be hanged, and the rest are fit inhabitants for a mad house." "I profess I think the gentleman is too severe upon a little innocent recreation," cried a fop, who was leaning upon the back of the sofa. "And who spoke to you, sir?" asked Mr. Selby: "*Innocent* recreation indeed! such as will conduct them into a prison, and their children into a workhouse." "Lard, how shocking!" exclaimed the mother of a large family who was noted for her attachment to painted paper, "how barbarous, to raise in one's mind such uncomfortable ideas!" "What do you call this head furniture?" said the old gentleman, taking hold of his niece's hair; "why, your neck is as bare as if you had been preparing for the block! Oh, how differently did they dress in my young days! but there was some modesty among the women then." "Good

heavens, sir," replied Miss Mordaunt, pettishly; "you would not have me dress like the picture of my grandmother?" "It would be more to your credit, niece," retorted he, "than to make such a display of your person: you will certainly catch your death."

While he was speaking, he had been deliberately folding together the two corners of a large silk handkerchief, which he had taken out of his pocket, and now put round Miss Mordaunt's neck, fastening it under her chin, with a pin which he had chosen from a number of others upon his coat sleeve. This article of dress, contrasted with her other habiliments, cut such a ridiculous figure, that a universal tittering took place among the group which surrounded her; and laughter, the more violent from the attempt to repress it, burst involuntarily from the younger part of the company. This put the

finishing stroke to her mortification: all her effrontery was insufficient to support her, and her vexation was encreased by the presence of Hervey. She tore the unfortunate handkerchief from her neck, and flung it upon the ground; then, telling her uncle that the brutality of his behaviour was insufferable, rushed out of the room, in which she made her appearance no more that evening.

The party that she had left, emancipated from the restraints of civility, gave unbounded scope to the mirth which the incident had excited. Many among them had smarted under the lash of Miss Mordaunt's ridicule, and even those who had not, rejoiced in the correction which had been given to pride and insolence.

So universal is the dislike of satirical propensities, that those who are so unfortunate as to indulge in them, create

to themselves numberless enemies, without displaying their own wit in the degree which they are apt to imagine: faults are generally more prominent than virtues, and no particular superiority of genius is required to point them out.

Mr. Selby looked after his niece till the door closed: he then picked up his handkerchief with a bitter smile, and casting a stern eye upon the circle of triflers, advanced towards them. All now dreaded for themselves that severity which had diverted them so much when levelled at another, and that part of the room where he stood was cleared in a moment. He shook his head contemptuously, but, satisfied with the rebuke which he had already given, he left the haunt of dissipation, and retired to the comfort of a warm bed.

The affair of the handkerchief was soon forgotten by Miss Mordaunt, or

thought of only to laugh at her foolishness in minding the asperity of a sour old bachelor. She took every opportunity to give the world reason to suppose that Frederic was her lover, and spared no endeavours to make him such. The formal addition of Mr. to his name was soon dropped; when they were alone it was, "My dear Unwin!" and upon these occasions she never failed to turn the conversation on the tender passion, using every means in her power to fascinate him both by her dress and deportment. Probably Frederic might sometimes feel a spark of the flame which she wished to kindle in his breast, but one thought of Selina was sufficient to quench it, and Miss Mordaunt had the mortification to find that all her advances were thrown away upon an ingrate. Yet she had still the satisfaction to know that the world had

given her to her father's partner, the report being industriously propagated by Hervey, through the medium of his friends, and they were both in hopes that it might reach Miss Dudley's ears, and create at least a temporary estrangement. But Miss Mordaunt's mind was too capacious to be engrossed by one pursuit, and her designs on Frederic did not prevent her from desiring the admiration of others. One night that he, and several young men, had attended her to the theatre, she descried Mr. Fermor in an opposite box. She had never seen him since the day that she had treated him so cavalierly, and, unwilling to lose entirely one of her most distinguished flatterers, she dispatched a gentleman of her train to request his company for a few minutes: ordering him to execute his commission successfully on pain of her displeasure. When

Fermor received the message, he vowed that he would not again trouble himself about such a jilt: but upon Mr. Vincent representing to him the good humour that she was in, and her condescension in sending for him, he was at length prevailed upon to go. Miss Mordaunt no sooner saw him, than she exclaimed, "My dear Mr. Fermor! where have you buried yourself this age, that I have never been gratified by your presence? I vow I have been in the utmost despair, and, but for this fortunate encounter, know not what might have become of me!" Pleased by this public notice, Fermor replied, that could he have entertained the least idea that his services would have been acceptable, they would doubtless have been offered; but he begged leave to remind her of the reception which he had met with at his last visit. "Oh fie!" answered she, with the most en-

couraging smile: "I thought you had been more a man of gallantry than to recal to a lady's recollection what she wishes to forget: you must not bear me enmity for a transient fit of ill-humour. Here is my hand, let us banish all remembrance of past follies." Fermor took it with rapture, declaring that she had bound him her slave for ever. Miss Mordaunt laughed, and, while she made room for him by her side, turning to Frederic, said, "Did you ever know such a fool? he is caught before one has time to make a net for his entanglement?"

Frederic, more and more disgusted by every new instance of her duplicity, answered not, and soon retreated to the further part of the box; leaving her heartily vexed at his desertion. She was surrounded by lovers, all ready to applaud her every word and action; she had just recovered an old one to her

train, but the desires of vanity are insatiable, and all this availed her nothing so long as there was one within the circle of her attraction who refused to acknowledge her influence.

CHAP. II.

" Ah! that deceit should steal such gentle
" shape,
" And with a virtuous vizor hide deep vice."

——" Work on,
" My med'cine, work! thus credulous fools are
" caught;
" And many worthy and chaste dames even
" thus,
" All guiltless, meet reproach."

SHAKSPEARE.

FREDERIC, at the times that he was disengaged from business, was now continually with Hervey; and no efforts of dissimulation were spared by the latter, to inspire him with such a high

THE TANJORE ✱ MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI MAHAL

opinion of his character, as might enable him, in some measure, to direct his actions. We are naturally pleased with those who seem attached to us without any apparent motive of interest, and Hervey was too agreeable for Frederic not to feel himself flattered by the anxiety which he demonstrated to gain his esteem: accounting in the most specious manner for any part of his conduct which seemed at variance with his maxims. It was not long before Frederic, in return for much pretended confidence reposed in him by Hervey, entrusted him with his passion for Selina: but without revealing her history, for he did not think himself at liberty to disclose the secrets of another. This discovery was hastened by an incident which raised his friend higher than ever in his estimation. One morning that he called on Hervey, he found a decent looking woman, of about fifty, in the

passage, who was earnestly entreating the servant to gain her admittance to his master. She was told that it was impossible, for he was particularly engaged. "Then I will wait till he is at liberty," she replied; "for I cannot rest till I have testified my heart-felt gratitude for the bounty which has saved me and my child from destruction."

Frederic stopped, and interested by the emotion visible in the good woman's countenance, anxious too to learn the particulars of his friend's benevolence, he dismissed the servant, and, promising that she should see Mr. Hervey, requested she would inform him on what occasion he had been of service to her. "That I will most willingly, sir," she returned: "such generous actions ought not to be hidden: and I sincerely wish that it were in my power to spread the fame of this

as far as it justly deserves." There was something in her language and manners above her appearance, and Frederic, involuntarily addressing her by the appellation of Madam, invited her to take a seat in a little back parlour while she related her story.

"My name, sir," she began, "is Brown; I was the wife of a tradesman, in good circumstances, and once knew better days; but it pleased God to bring me to poverty. Bad debts and unavoidable misfortunes involved my husband, two years ago, in bankruptcy. Poor man, it was his death blow! he could not bear to see the hardships to which we were reduced, and, soon after, left me, with an only daughter about seventeen, to struggle alone with the world. The creditors raised a subscription for our benefit, and one gentleman, who seemed particularly interested for us, let me a small house,

at a low rent; in which I kept a little shop for fruit, cakes, and the common sort of children's toys. We went on pretty tolerably, and just got enough for our subsistence; but found it impossible to pay the rent the first year; and when I told my landlord of my inability he promised to wait till it was more in my power. My daughter has the misfortune to be beautiful, and to have been educated in a style far superior to her present situation; in consequence, conscious of the temptations to which she was likely to be exposed, I never suffered her to enter the shop; but one unhappy afternoon, as we were drinking tea in the little back room, my landlord unexpectedly entered. He seemed much struck with Anna's appearance, asked me many questions about her, and, from that day, was frequently at the house. His visits made me uneasy, yet I knew not how

to refuse admittance to a man to whom I was in debt: but he soon discovered the most dishonourable intentions towards my poor girl, and, on her rejecting his base proposals, he threatened to seize upon my goods, and to turn us out of the house. He left us but till to-morrow to decide between infamy and ruin. I had let the upper part of my house to a mantua-maker, and, by this means, had collected enough to pay him for one year; and, as my business had increased, was in a fair way to acquit myself of the whole; but I owed for two, and he refused to give me any more time, except on the conditions which I have mentioned. I applied to the few, whom I thought my friends, endeavouring to raise the money, but in vain; and yesterday I went to this inhuman man in the hope of softening his callous bosom by my tears. I failed in my purpose; yet my guardian

angel was at work for me in my absence. Mr. Hervey came into the shop, and, seeing Anna in tears, enquired the reason of her sorrow: when the dear girl, emboldened by despair, related the harsh designs of our landlord; though her modesty prevented her from telling him the reason of his conduct. He expressed much concern for our misfortunes; bidding Anna not to give way to despondency, for she might yet find a friend when she expected it the least. Upon my return from my fruitless visit she told me what had passed; but we could not place much dependence upon the hopes given by an entire stranger. Last night we were lamenting together our deplorable situation; anticipating all the horror of houseless want, and the lowest extreme of wretchedness, from which we saw no prospect of relief; when a knock at the door roused our attention. I open-

thanks for his unexampled goodness! May every blessing be his which the Almighty can bestow!"

Mrs. Brown here ended her short narrative; and Frederic, his heart glowing with the warmest approbation of his friend's benevolence, went up stairs to prevail upon him to give her audience. Hervey appeared vexed to find him acquainted with his generosity, and would have declined seeing Mrs. Brown; saying that he disliked the office of listening to his own praises: but Frederic telling him that he ought to conquer his delicacy to give the poor woman the satisfaction of testifying her gratitude, and using other arguments to the same purpose, he was, at last, persuaded to go down.

On his return, the conversation continued upon the same topic, and Hervey described the unaffected grace and modest beauty of the lovely Anna; ex-

pressing, in strong terms, his abhorrence of the wretch who could see such charms, and form a wish to blast their purity. This subject naturally reminded Frederic of his Selina, and he gratified his friend by a confidence which had been long expected.

When he had related the history of his attachment, Hervey observed, "I should be sorry to make you uneasy, or to weaken your faith in Miss Dudley's constancy; but I own that what you have said of Mr. Dorian alarms me. If he is really fond of her, the power of forming an union with a man who, even now, is able to raise her considerably in the world, must be a strong temptation to a girl who has probably been used to comforts and elegancies beyond what she can at present enjoy."

"I once entertained the same fears," replied Frederic, "but that was before I had summoned courage to avow my

passion: from the moment that she owned a mutual love, my confidence in her sincerity banished all my doubts. Selina is too ingenuous to practise deception, and if she felt an alteration in her sentiments, which God forbid! I should not be the last to hear of it." Hervey shook his head with an incredulous smile; and, when Frederic demanded an explanation, only answered, "I sincerely wish, my dear friend, that your opinion may be nearer the truth than mine: perhaps I am apt to draw rules that are too general from some circumstances which have happened within my knowledge." Frederic begged to be informed of them. "Why should you wish it," returned Hervey: "it will probably, at some future time, occasion suspicions in your mind which may be unfounded." This feigned reluctance naturally increased Frederic's desire for the communication, and Her-

vey, with seeming unwillingness, related a story of a friend of his who had paid his addresses to a lady apparently as amiable as Miss Dudley; by whom, only a short time before the period fixed for their union, he had been forsaken for an offer superior in point of wealth, though the man was old enough to be her father. "There cannot be many such," said Frederic: "but if there were, my confidence in Selina would not be diminished:" and Hervey did not, at that time, choose to say more upon the subject. Frederic, afterwards, frequently indulged himself in expatiating, to his friend, on the happiness which he should enjoy in a connexion with Miss Dudley. Hervey listened with apparent interest, but never failed to add, "If she should remain constant;" "if you are not deprived of her by Dorian;" or some remark of

the like nature: thus instilling the poison of suspicion into his mind by imperceptible degrees.

When Frederic received Selina's letter, containing the intelligence of Mrs. Dobson's death, and her intention of residing with Mrs. Vernon, he hastened to communicate it to Hervey. "My presentiments when I quitted Heathdale were but too true!" he exclaimed, as he entered the room: "the happy hours which I have spent at the farm are gone for ever: it is deserted by it's lovely inmate!" Hervey was not ignorant of what had passed at the village; but Frederic's words admitted of two interpretations, of which he failed not to avail himself. "What!" he replied, in much seeming consternation; "has she eloped with Mr. Dorian?" "Not so," said Frederic; "she has been most unfortunate!" and

he repeated the circumstances which had obliged her to leave Heathdale. He could not help thinking that, had his father been earnest in his endeavours to detain Selina, she would not have denied his request; but reverencing him too much to mention his sentiments to his friend, he continued, "I fear the dear girl will not be comfortable in the situation to which she is going; would that it were in my power to offer her a more eligible home! Do you know Mrs. Vernon?" But slightly," returned he; "I have sometimes met her in company. She is an agreeable, and, I have heard, an amiable woman." "You will allow," said Frederic, "that Selina's present conduct is a proof that your suspicions, with regard to Montague, are unfounded: she would not have left Heathdale when invited to remain, had she been biassed in his favour, nor

have preferred earning her own subsistence to the chance of obtaining his hand." Again Hervey shook his head incredulously. "May not Montague follow her to town?" asked he: "She could not, with any appearance of decency, have received his addresses under the eye of your family." "Good heavens! my dear Hervey," cried Frederic, "what can induce you thus to misinterpret every thing that she does? you are not usually so uncharitable. Surely you can have no particular reason for your apprehensions?" Hervey walked to the window without answering. "Tell me, for mercy's sake!" said Frederic, "have you heard any thing?" "Perhaps it may not be true," replied Hervey; "so why should I make you uneasy; my hints were meant only to put you upon your guard: I would have you watchful whether you see any signs of decreasing love in her

behaviour." "Oh, Hervey, how you torture me by this well-meant forbearance!" exclaimed Frederic: "I must know the whole. If you have any regard for me, keep me no longer in suspense!" "Since you insist upon it, my dear Unwin, I will, though reluctantly, tell you on what I have grounded the frequent doubts which I have expressed on this subject. You have heard me speak of my correspondence with a gentleman at Midhurst: when you informed me of your attachment to Miss Dudley, in the next letter I wrote to him I expressed my surprise that he had never mentioned the fair stranger who had taken up her residence so near him; said that I had casually heard of her, and begged some more particulars. He told me, in answer, that before Mr. Frederic Unwin went to London it was generally reported that he paid his addresses to Miss

Dudley, but that, since his departure, Mr. Dorian had been continually at the farm; and the young lady, it was reported, was not insensible to his attentions: that he had himself rallied the gentleman upon his success, who seemed vexed that the affair had become so public, but did not attempt to deny its truth." "It was his abominable art!" interrupted Frederic: "he prided himself in having it believed that so lovely a creature was attached to him." "I know not how that may be; but could such a report arise without some foundation?" questioned Hervey. Frederic paced the room in agony. "If this be true," he exclaimed, "there is not such a wretch on earth as myself!" "I hope it is false," said Hervey, rejoicing to see the poison work according to his wishes: "yet her asking you not to meet her on her arrival does not shew any eager desire to see you."

Frederic groaned; and hoping, by change of place, to relieve the anguish of his mind, he left his friend, and wandered into the park, regardless of the fast falling snow which whitened the surface of the earth.

Thus far Hervey succeeded in executing the commission which he had received from Montague; but he had failed in his endeavours to corrupt Frederic's morals: though he was not without hopes that his character might suffer, in the estimation of Miss Dudley, by the acquaintance to whom he had introduced him. He had prevailed upon him to enter into a club, of which he was himself a member; yet, though the gentlemen that composed it were free-livers in every sense of the word, he had never been tempted much to transgress the rules of sobriety, or to join them in their other excesses. When Hervey found that Frederic had not

bent his steps homeward, he set out himself to acquaint Miss Mordaunt with Selina's expected arrival; and she expressed much curiosity to see the wonderful being who had rendered Unwin insensible to all other attractions. "I am immensely glad that I happen to visit Mrs. Vernon," said she; "it will delight me infinitely to stare Miss Dudley's country simplicity out of countenance. But what could induce her to leave the elegant employments of making butter, and counting over new laid eggs, to enter into polished society? Her ruddy charms must here be quite out of their element." "She quits Heathdale," replied Hervey, "because she is too poor to remain there any longer, and is coming to Mrs. Vernon in the capacity of humble companion." "Is that all!" returned Miss Mordaunt, with a contemptuous toss of her head: "then there will be no oc-

casion to treat the creature with much ceremony. But I am astonished that a woman of Mrs. Vernon's elegant taste should encumber herself with such an awkward tramontane." While she was entertaining herself with the idea of mortifying poor Selina, Frederic, tortured by the spirit of jealousy which Hervey had raised, was suffering, by anticipation, all the misery of disappointed passion. He painted to himself the reception which he might experience at his next meeting with Selina: instead of the pleasure which used to mantle on her cheeks, and sparkle in her eyes at his approach, he saw cold civility, or, at best, a constrained attention. Then his fancy represented her as the wife of Dorian, and his heart sickened at the thought. Again, he reproached himself with daring to harbour suspicions of her principles, which

were authorized by no part of her conduct that he had witnessed. He reflected upon her unostentatious performance of every duty; upon the contented cheerfulness with which she had borne a reverse of fortune; and he thought it impossible that the temptation of wealth could, in such a mind, have induced a dereliction from rectitude. "If falsehood can dwell in my Selina's bosom," he exclaimed, "farewell, for ever, all faith in woman's honour! I will mark her behaviour, and judge for myself of the truth of Hervey's information: his friend may have been deceived." With this resolution, he calmed, in some degree, his troubled thoughts; and, now first becoming sensible of the severity of the weather, hastened home. Miss Mordaunt longed to rally him upon the expected arrival of his rural enslaver; but the

promise of secrecy which she had made to Hervey, and the certainty that it would come to his knowledge if she transgressed, chained her tongue.

CHAP. III.

" With haste to meet him sprang the joyful fair."
POPE'S HOMER.

" It is jealousy's peculiar nature
" To swell small things to great, nay out of nought
" To conjure much; and then to lose its reason
" Amid the hideous phantoms it has form'd."
YOUNG.

WE will now turn our attention to Miss Dudley, whom we left in Mrs. Vernon's drawing-room. During their tête-à-tête, the latter told her that it would be necessary to settle the terms on which she was to enjoy the pleasure of her company. She added, that

if she were to offer a salary proportioned to the satisfaction which she promised herself in her society, she must exceed the bounds of prudence: would £50 per annum answer her wishes. Selina said it was more than she could hope to merit: but Mrs. Vernon observing that she was the best judge of that, it was arranged accordingly. Selina wished to mention Frederic, but did not know how to enter on the subject: yet, as she expected to receive a visit from him the next morning, it would be an awkward circumstance without some explanation. She was relieved from this embarrassment by Mrs. Vernon asking if she had any acquaintance in town; and she immediately related her engagement to Mr. Mordaunt's partner. "I knew that Mr. Unwin was from Heathdale," said Mrs. Vernon, "but I had no idea that he had left his heart there; for it is ge-

nerally reported that he will obtain the hand of Miss Mordaunt: she will be an immense fortune." "So I have understood," replied Selina, firmly. Her confidence in Frederic was too deeply rooted to be shaken by a vague report; she thought Mrs. Vernon's mentioning it to her was no proof of her delicacy; and she was determined not to give her an opportunity of enlarging upon it, by declaring her disbelief of its truth.

Mrs. Vernon was vexed and disappointed that her remark had not the intended effect; and observed to herself, "This girl will be more unmanageable than I supposed." But she was too much a woman of the world to betray her thoughts; and, turning the discourse upon her mode of living, she said, "You have probably been used to rise early in the country: I sleep late myself; but, as I am generally engaged in an evening, I shall not wish to de-

tain you longer than suits with your inclinations." Mr. Villars and Mr. Milner, the two gentlemen who had dined with Mrs. Vernon, now entered, and the conversation became general.

The next morning, Miss Dudley rose at nine; and the servant coming to light the fire, expressed much surprise at seeing her out of bed so early. "My mistress will not be up these three hours, Madam," said she; "but I will get the breakfast-parlour ready directly." Selina begged that she would not hurry herself on her account, as she should be employed for some time in unpacking. She had left her drawings in the care of Louisa, but she arranged her books in the light closet within her apartment. The view of the park drew her to the window; and, susceptible of the charms of nature in all her varieties, she enjoyed, for some time, the prospect of the winter-piece before her. It was

a clear, frosty morning; the expanse above was "blue without a cloud, and white without a speck; the dazzling splendour of the scene below." As she gazed upon it, she pleased herself with the thought of the delightful hours which, when the spring advanced, she should spend there with her books or drawing.

Miss Dudley was roused from her contemplation by being told that she was enquired for by a gentleman below. She flew down stairs at the summons, the glow of rapture upon her lovely countenance, and was in Frederic's arms in a moment. All thought of his suspicions vanished from his mind, as he viewed her joy-animated features, and he pressed her to his bosom in silent transport. When their first emotions were a little subsided, Frederic enquired after his friends at Heathdale, and received a letter from

Louisa, which he declined reading then, saying, that he would not deprive himself of a moment's conversation with his Selina. "I came early, love," he continued, "that I might have the pleasure of seeing you alone: I would not, for the world, have had the rapture of our first meeting profaned by the presence of a third person! But tell me, for I know that you are a nice discriminator of character, what is your opinion of Mrs. Vernon? Do you think she is a woman with whom you can be happy?" "I have not seen enough of her, at present, to form any decided judgment," replied Miss Dudley. "She is highly pleasing in her manners, and seems to wish to render me comfortable; but she does not appear to me to understand that delicacy which is always fearful of hurting the feelings of others: she might give pain a thousand times without being conscious of it her-

self. A girl of irritable sensibility would be miserable as her companion; but you know, my dear friend, that I am not of a disposition to take offence where none is meant, and as long as she behaves to me with politeness, I shall be perfectly satisfied in my present situation." "You would be satisfied, my dear Selina," answered he, "where few others would; but I can hardly the less lament your being reduced to a station so far beneath your merits. I did not suppose that my father, after his promises to me, would have suffered you to leave Heathdale; or to have sought in the world for an asylum, when it was in his power to have offered you one himself." Miss Dudley assured him that it was not from want of persuasion to stay, that she had quitted the shelter of his father's hospitable roof; but that she could not bear to be a burden upon his fa-

mily, to which she already lay under so many obligations. She added, that she had passed many happy hours in their society; as, since his departure, her evenings had generally been spent at the parsonage. "Did you often meet any of the other inhabitants of the village?" asked Frederic, his thoughts now first reverting to Montague, though his suspicions were nearly obliterated. "Mr. Dorian has been there a good deal lately," replied Selina: "he seems to be still a favourite with Mr. Unwin." "Indeed!" rejoined Frederic: "he is generally reckoned an agreeable man; and I doubt not that you are of the same opinion. Perhaps it was the addition of his company that made your evenings pass so pleasantly at the parsonage." Selina gazed at him with astonishment. "Did I hear you right?" she exclaimed: "was I to choose your father's acquaintance?

or is it necessary, in order to prove my attachment to you, that I should look upon every other man with disgust?" "Certainly not," answered Frederic, all Hervey's information rushing at once into his mind; "and, if report may be believed, you viewed Mr. Dorian with very different sentiments." Miss Dudley both looked and felt extremely hurt. "After what has passed, Frederic," said she, "I did not believe that you could have found any more room for jealousy! Your suspicions do not merit refutation; but were I inclined to break my engagement, they would fully justify me. After the many opportunities which you have had of observing my conduct, you should have known me better. I give, perhaps, too great a proof of the partiality which you doubt, when I pass over what is due to myself, and ask you on what you have founded your distrust." "If

my jealousy is groundless," replied Frederic, "I have indeed not deserved forgiveness!" He then related what he had heard from Hervey; adding, "From my trust in your rectitude, ever beloved Selina, I had reasoned myself into a disbelief of its truth, till your mention of having so often met with Montague lately, again awakened the dæmon of suspicion in my bosom." "I had fondly flattered myself," returned Selina, "that your affection had been founded upon a knowledge of my character: I thought that I deserved confidence, and I expected to have gained it: but I see, with grief, that you put more faith in the suggestions of an acquaintance of three months' standing, than in the truth of her whose heart has been laid open to your inspection from the moment that it confessed itself to be your's. If my sentiments towards you had altered, I should have been above

the meanness of dissimulation; but it is in your power alone to change the nature of my feelings. It is true, I believe that Mr. Dorian is attached to me: and it is also true, that from the time it first came to my knowledge, he has never paid a single visit at the farm: but it would have been ridiculous affectation had I refused to meet him at your father's, while he continued to treat me with the utmost respect, and strictly kept the silence which I had enjoined him upon one subject. It would surely have given him reason to suppose that I mistrusted my own constancy; than which, nothing could be further from the fact. His partiality for me, I have, till now, never mentioned to any one; for I think it ungenerous in a woman to spread abroad the intelligence of a passion which she does not mean to return."

Miss Dudley here ceased speaking;

but finding that Frederic, his eyes bent upon the ground, still remained silent, she continued, "Tell me, my friend, have I satisfied your doubts? are you yet convinced that you have nothing to fear from Montague Dorian?" Frederic took her hand, and reclining his face upon it, replied, "Oh Selina, little have I deserved that you should have deigned to justify your faultless conduct! What excuse can I plead but my doubts of meriting the affection of such excellence, which render me ever fearful of losing what to me is dearer than life." "And why those doubts?" answered Selina. "If you will be so diffident of your own merit, you ought to consider, my dear Frederic, that love is founded partly upon caprice, and that a creative imagination is able to invest the favoured object in ornaments invisible to the eye of a common observer. While the qualities of your heart re-

main such as when I first knew you, you need not fear that I should renounce my faith, or that any one will, in my eyes, possess superior powers of pleasing. If I could but completely exorcise the ugly fiend, jealousy, I should be perfectly contented; it is that alone which is likely to make discord between us." "It shall be banished for ever from my bosom," said he. "It is in your absence only, that any evil passions have dominion over me: they fly at your approach, as the vapours before the morning sun." "But when the sun is set," rejoined Selina, with a smile, "the mists are apt to resume their influence: possibly when you are gone from my presence, you will recollect that you have only my assurances to set against your friend's intelligence. I would have your reason convinced as well as your love. You must write to Louisa, and ask her if

Mr. Dorian has been continually at the farm since you left Heathdale; otherwise Mr. Hervey may again persuade you to confide in the truth of his reports." "Never, my dearest girl, will I take a step, which would indeed be a proof of the most incorrigible jealousy," replied Frederic. "Believe me, this conversation has fixed in my mind so firm a reliance on your constancy and sincerity, that the most questionable circumstances should not induce me to harbour a mistrust of your faith, unless it were confirmed by your own avowal. For Hervey, I cannot believe that he intended to deceive me; the person from whom he had the information, must alone have been to blame." "It is almost worth while to quarrel, for the pleasure of a reconciliation," said Selina, joy again animating her features: "I shall take it into my head, some day, to be jealous of Miss Mordaunt.

Do you know, I have heard, since my arrival in town, that you were going to be married to that lady?" "Oh heavens, what a rival you have conjured up!" answered Frederic: "if there is one woman in the world whom I dislike, it is Miss Mordaunt: her forward and indelicate behaviour is insupportably disgusting. If I could hesitate for a moment between her and my Selina, well might the words of Hamlet to his mother be applied to me, 'Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed, and batten on this moor?' "

They were interrupted by the entrance of Mrs. Vernon, to whom Miss Dudley introduced Frederic: she asked him to partake of their meal; but he said he had already breakfasted, and soon after took his leave.

CHAP. IV.

"I hate when vice can bolt her arguments,
"And virtue has no tongue to check her pride."

MILTON.

"Man is to man the sorest, surest ill.—
"Ruin from him is most conceal'd when near,
"And sends the dreadful tidings in the blow."

YOUNG.

THE morning after Miss Dudley came, Mrs. Vernon chose to remain *at home;* and when the hour of visiting arrived, the door rung with repeated raps. The gentlemen of the preceding night were of the number that now assembled in the drawing-room; but

the person that chiefly engrossed Selina's attention, was a quaker, or one of the *friends*. She had never been in company with one before; and the peculiarity of her language attracted her notice. Rachel Barclay was a middle-aged woman, dressed in a plain brown sarsenet, and a bonnet of the same material. She had once been beautiful, and her complexion was still delicate; but though the roses of youth were banished from her cheeks, its fire yet animated her eyes, when her indignation was excited by the insolence of pride, or the cruelty of oppression.

A young lady, more remarkable for the volubility of her tongue than the good qualities of her heart, asked if any one had heard of the elopement of Lady Laura Greville. "It is certainly true," added she, "notwithstanding the fuss which she made about prudence and virtue, setting herself up as a pat-

tern for her sex, that she last night left her husband, with a young officer in the marines: they were seen together, in a post-chaise, on the road to Barnet." "And is their being seen together the only proof of Laura Greville's deviation from rectitude?" asked Mrs. Barclay: "and is the tongue of a trifler to be put in the balance against the established reputation of such a woman?" "La, what other proof would you require?" said Miss Aston; "I had the information from Mr. Morris; he saw them himself—so there can be no doubt of its truth: and it is plain they could not be together at that time in the evening for any good purpose. For my part, I have always observed that prudes usually turn out the worst." "In this light age," returned Mrs. Barclay, "virtue is so rare, that, when it makes its appearance, it is sure to be stigmatized by the name of prudery. Hath

any one else," looking round upon the company, "heard of Laura Greville's elopement?" A general silence prevailed, and she continued, "I have known her long and intimately, and I dare answer for her conduct. I would advise thee, friend Aston, not to let thy disposition to lower merit, expose thee to be thought an inventor of scandal." "La, how ill-natured!" said Miss Aston to her next neighbour; "but, you may depend upon it, my intelligence will prove true." "Has Lady Laura any family?" asked Miss Dudley, while most of the company were entertaining themselves at the suspected lady's expence. "Three lovely girls," replied Mrs. Barclay. "Oh, then it is impossible," cried Selina, with warmth, "that any temptation could have induced her to forsake them!" "Thou art right," answered the quaker, viewing her with an eye which seemed to say, 'Who art

thou that possessest such sentiments.' "Laura Greville hath the feelings of a mother: the children whom she hath brought into the world, she thinketh it her duty to educate in the love of rectitude; and she will not, in her own person, set them an evil example." She had scarcely spoken, when Mr. Greville was announced. Every eye was immediately turned upon him, all eagerly searching in his countenance for the traces of the misfortune which was reported to have befallen him:—but the search was vain. He told Mrs. Vernon that the sight of carriages at her door had induced him to stop a moment to pay her his respects. She enquired after Lady Laura;—and every ear was open to receive his answer. "I am sorry to say," he replied, "that she is gone out of town upon a melancholy occasion; but I hope things will turn out better than she expects. Her

youngest brother, who has been for some time on service in the Mediterranean, returned home yesterday. In the midst of their first joy at meeting, she received a letter express to inform her that her mother was very ill, and wished to see her. Captain Fitzroy set off with her last night, on their way into Derbyshire." Mrs. Barclay cast an indignant look at Miss Aston; and Mr. Greville taking his leave soon after, the young lady made her retreat at the same time, to avoid the rebuff which she had reason to expect. The movement occasioned by their departure gave Mrs. Barclay an opportunity of seating herself next to Selina. "It rejoiceth me," she said, "that an opinion which did honour to thy heart hath been so speedily confirmed. I have never seen thee before: hast thou been long in this great city?" Miss Dudley informed her that she arrived

only the night before, and that her residence in future would be with Mrs. Vernon. Mrs. Barclay was going to reply, when Miss Mordaunt made her appearance. As she entered, her eyes wandered over the room in search of the awkward rustic that Hervey had described; and not being able to distinguish her, she supposed that her bashfulness had prevented her from mixing in so large a circle. But when Miss Dudley was introduced to her, by Mrs. Vernon, as she had been to the rest of the company, she absolutely started with surprise, and, as she viewed her elegant figure, felt envy take place of contempt. She recollected herself, however, in time to withhold the involuntary tribute of respect claimed by her appearance; and turning from her with rudeness, seated herself at a distance from Mrs. Vernon. She then asked those who surrounded her, if

they knew who Miss Dudley was; and, upon their professing their ignorance, told them that she was a girl whom Mrs. Vernon had taken from the employments of a dairy, to be her companion: adding, "she was originally a lace-maker, I believe. Is it not astonishing that so polished a woman should think of introducing her to her friends, if she chooses to entertain herself with her when alone?" Selina could not help seeing, from Miss Mordaunt's looks, and the looks of her audience, that she was concerned in her discourse; that it was not in her favour was also obvious, from the contemptuous glances which were directed towards her. That lady's rudeness, upon the introduction, had not passed unnoticed; but, totally unable to account for any part of her conduct, and conscious herself that she had never done an act which she wished to conceal, she felt her spirits rise in

proportion to the insult that was intended to weigh them down. Mrs. Barclay, too, had watchfully observed Miss Mordaunt's behaviour, and asked Miss Dudley if she knew her. "Of her character I have heard," replied Selina, "but never saw her till this moment: nor should I have supposed that my name could have reached her ears, were not such rudeness to a total stranger quite unaccountable." "I would not wish to seem impertinent," said Mrs. Barclay, "but thy appearance interesteth me: art thou related to my neighbour Vernon?" "Not in the least," answered Miss Dudley; "I am in the situation of her companion." "Then the conduct of that woman is easily accounted for," observed the quaker: "the circumstance hath, by some means, come to her knowledge; and, in the littleness of pride, she spreadeth the information with malicious plea-

sure." "Be it so," returned Selina; "for I must ever disdain the attention which is paid only to rank and fortune. I cannot be degraded by another; it must be my own act." "Thou reasonest justly," said Mrs. Barclay: "virtue is true nobility, and superior talents a wealth which cannot be lessened by man: such only as are destitute of these, place merit in adventitious advantages."

Miss Mordaunt was now giving an account, in a loud tone, of a visit which she had paid, the preceding afternoon, to some relations from the country, come, for the first time, to pass the winter in London. "They are three sisters," said she, "not very young, who have had a fortune left them; so, without an idea but what could be collected from parson's wives and fox-hunting-squires, they are come to town to learn airs and graces; and most unreason-

ably expect that we should introduce them into company. But, Lord protect me from being seen with such Hottentots! They are much mistaken if they think that I shall go near them again. I had nearly paid dear for my civility yesterday. An awkward country servant touched my arm with the bottom of the odious tea-kettle, as he was filling the tea-pot; and had not the water boiled, I should inevitably have been burnt." "I cannot imagine how the water boiling could have saved your lovely arm from being injured," said a boy-officer, who appeared as if he had made his escape from the nursery, to put on a red coat. "It is a pity, young Sir," cried an old gentleman, "that you were not kept at school till you had learned a little natural philosophy." "I am not such a fool," replied the ensign, with a fashionable oath, "as to believe all that I learned

there. I remember to have heard of fire not burning: but I know, by experience, that it is a confounded lie." "I think you must be mistaken, Sir," said Miss Dudley, finding that no one answered him: "you probably heard that fire has no heat in itself, but only the power of imparting it to surrounding objects." "That is curious doctrine!" exclaimed Miss Mordaunt, contemptuously: "I have often known it laughed at, but never heard it explained. Nobody shall persuade me, when I feel the warmth, that fire is not hot." "From such beautiful lips, one may believe any thing," observed the officer, fixing his eyes with an impudent stare upon Selina. "I should be sorry," replied she, with an air of dignity which awed the young upstart, "if the foolishness of my words required the aid of beauty to give them weight. I will readily inform Miss Mordaunt of what is said by

Locke, the author of the doctrine which she thinks so absurd. 'If it is true that fire gives heat, does it not also give pain? yet who ever thought that pain was resident in fire?—and why one, more than the other?' I quote from memory; therefore may not be quite correct." "I have no notion of dependents giving their opinion before their superiors!" said Miss Mordaunt, in a whisper, which was meant to be heard, to an admirer who sat near her. "I have always thought," returned Miss Dudley, looking at her with the utmost composure, "that those who could talk without wishing to hurt the feelings of others, were qualified to enter into conversation." Miss Mordaunt tossed back her head, provoked that she could not awe the little being into silence. "By heaven, Madam," said Mr. Villars to Selina, "I wish that all were denied the privilege of speech

who do not keep their tongues within so excellent a rule!" "Have a little mercy," exclaimed Mr. Milner, "consider how many pretty mouths would be silenced by such a restriction."

Miss Mordaunt could not bear that any one else should be noticed where she was present, and least of all Selina; therefore, to attract the attention of the gentlemen, she talked in a higher key. Her conversation partook of the indecorum of her manner, abounding in equivoque and double entendre; seeming desirous to amuse her male auditors at the expence of the feelings of her own sex. Yet was she equally unfortunate in her attempts at the character of a belle esprit, or a woman of fashion; and the distressing blushes which she called forth on the cheeks of the ladies, induced the gentlemen to change the laugh with which they, at first, hailed her attempts at wit, into the

silence of contempt. "Hast thou forgotten the art of blushing?" enquired Mrs. Barclay, in a low voice. "I leave that odious accomplishment to young ladies from the country," replied Miss Mordaunt, aloud, and casting a sarcastic glance at Selina. "Friend Dudley," said the quaker, taking her hand, "I prefer country virtues to town insolence. I shall be glad to see thee at my dwelling: it is next door to my neighbour Vernon; come in whenever thou hast half an hour to spare; thou shalt be welcome." So saying, she withdrew; and Miss Mordaunt, exclaiming "Oh, the Goth!" followed her example.

When the rest of the company were gone, Selina enquired of Mrs. Vernon if she had been long acquainted with Mrs. Barclay. "She has been my next neighbour ever since I lived in Spring Garden," she replied: "when

I first came, she resided with an aunt, who has been dead these ten years. Mrs. Barclay was an only child, and inherited an immense fortune from her father: but, it is said, a disappointment in love, when she was very young, has kept her single, and, I believe, soured her temper; for there are but few who are fortunate enough to please her. You seem to have gained her good opinion; and, if so, you are very lucky, for she has no relations that I know of." Selina observed, that she should never court the favour of any body from interested motives; but that, when Mrs. Vernon could spare her, she should be happy to accept Mrs. Barclay's invitation; for which she received full permission.

The next morning was dedicated by Mrs. Vernon to visiting and shopping; while Miss Dudley, whose attendance was [illegible]pensed with, took that opportu-

nity of calling on Mrs. Barclay. She went early, and found her alone; the quaker welcomed her with cordiality. "If I am not mistaken in thee, friend," she said, "I shall have reason to rejoice in thy residence with my neighbour Vernon: yet I am not now to learn, that where there is so great a disparity of age, there is seldom a parity of sentiment. I am a plain woman, accustomed to speak my thoughts: do thou also the same; so shall we the sooner know each other: and let us not associate from civility, if it be not mutually agreeable." "I will imitate your frankness, Madam," replied Selina: "I own, that what I have hitherto seen of your character, pleases me; and I should be happy to cultivate your friendship: but if, upon further acquaintance, you do not find me answer your expectations, you need not fear to let me know it. I may be grieved, but

shall certainly not be offended, at your making use of the privilege, which every one ought to have, of choosing their companions according to their own taste." "Thou hast prejudiced me much in thy favour," returned Mrs. Barclay; "but, alas, the days of romance, of unsuspecting enthusiasm, ought with me to be over! though too apt, I must not judge from the impulse of the moment. Let me see thee as frequently as thou canst; and on this day fortnight let us candidly confess to each other whether that intercourse has confirmed our mutual good opinion. We shall soon be interrupted by company; this is the only day in the week on which I receive morning visitors; but to thee my doors shall be open at all hours when thou art inclined to enter them." Selina, as she looked at her, thought she perceived a trace of melancholy in her face, which the shade

of her bonnet, the day before, had concealed from her observation, and she felt interested to know her history.

A rap at the door now announced an arrival, and Miss Dudley was introduced to Mrs. and Miss Beauclerk. Other ladies soon after made their appearance, among whom was a Mrs. Ormsby, who thought proper to entertain the company with the wonderful remarks and witty sayings of her little boy, just turned two years old. "I cannot bear spoiled children," observed Mrs. Asper, a morose looking woman: "I have brought up a large family, and, thank Heaven, never indulged any of them. I always made them obey my will as their only rule of action, and never suffered them to have an opinion of their own; it is infinitely the least trouble: I hate to hear children pretend to reason." "I readily agree with thee," answered Mrs. Barclay, "that

to bring up children like slaves is, undoubtedly, the least trouble; but is it therefore the properest way? If their rational powers are not exercised, they will never be capable of judging for themselves; yet, even in the most protected station, circumstances will occur to make that necessary." "If I may be allowed to give my opinion," said a timid looking girl, "I can speak feelingly on this subject: too well I know the disadvantages they experience whose thoughts as well as actions have been under perpetual restraint. Accustomed to follow implicitly the direction of others, they are at a loss, even in the most common occurrences, if left to their own guidance: and O, how unequal they are to struggle through the world!" "I am very young," observed Selina, "to speak on such a topic; yet it is one towards which circumstances have combined to direct my attention.

I hardly know which is most destructive to the powers of the human mind, severe restriction or unbounded indulgence; the one cramps the faculties as the other weakens them: their effect too depends so much upon the tempers on which they act. Difficult as is the task of education, yet it appears to me that there is no art less generally studied: I mean that branch which relates to forming the disposition, not to the acquisition of accomplishments. How many women become mothers without having bestowed a thought on the subject! It is melancholy to see the little attention paid to a point in which is involved the character of the rising generation: yet when one observes the conduct of many parents towards their children, the wrong principles and erroneous ideas which they instil into them from their infancy, it is only wonderful that the consequences are not still more conspi-

cuous in the moral world. I own that I am almost tempted to turn Quixotte on this subject, I view it in so important a light." "I suppose the young lady has been reading Mrs. More's Strictures, or Mrs. Hamilton's Letters," said Mrs. Ormsby, sarcastically. "Pardon me, madam," replied Selina, "if I breathe a wish that no woman were to become mistress of a family till she had not only read, but seriously considered, those excellent productions." "Upon my word you would make matrimony a most formidable business!" returned Mrs. Ormsby. "For my part I looked upon it as an emancipation from restraint, as a licence to act as I pleased; and if I give up my time to my children instead of dissipation, I flatter myself that my conduct is very meritorious." "The one is certainly much more commendable than the other," said Mrs. Barclay: "but then I can-

not regard that person as a good mother whose love is founded only upon instinct, and doth not consider the permanent happiness of its object; she, in short, who is actuated by her feelings only, not by a sense of duty. I know a woman of this description, who professeth so to dote upon her child that she would not part with her, though it were to her of the most essential benefit: yet, as she acteth only from the impulse of the moment, she will, sometimes, punish her severely for faults which at another time pass unnoticed; never considering the intention, but the mischievous consequence by which it is followed. Through this conduct the child loseth all distinction of right and wrong; for she hath sense enough to see that her treatment dependeth on her mother's humour and not on her own behaviour. Unfit is that person for the government of a family who cannot

controul her own temper! Children should never be used with caprice; nor should they ever be allowed to gain that by importunity, which hath once been refused." "I have observed," remarked Miss Dudley, "that no error is more common, particularly in servants, to whom children are too much intrusted, than that of deceiving them in order to induce their obedience. If they have a medicine to take, they are told that it is very good; if a person to whom they are attached is leaving them, they are taken out and told that it is the road on which they will meet them. By repeated deceptions the manœuvre is of no avail, for they lose all confidence in the persons who have frequently abused it, and, what is of still more importance, they lose all regard for truth, when they find that it is so little respected by those about them. In my opinion there is nothing so truly painful,

as to see a child of a good disposition totally warped and spoiled by mismanagement: often neither from absolute severity or unbounded indulgence, but from want of judgment to regulate the due degrees of each." "All this is very fine," cried Mrs. Ormsby, rising; "but, according to your plan, one must be for ever thinking whether a thing is proper or improper: so much trouble would absolutely be my death. I wish you a good morning Mrs. Barclay." With these words, and bending to the company, she withdrew, followed by Mrs. Asper. "You seem to understand the subject of education, Miss Dudley," said Mrs. Beauclerk, when the other visitors were gone; "I wish you could tell me how to correct the inordinate vanity of a young friend of mine. She is certainly beautiful, but, without flattery, she does not possess your attractions: yet you do not seem to pride

yourself upon 'a set of features or complexion.' How comes it that you are the only person insensible to your own superiority?" "I am by no means blind to the advantages of a pleasing appearance," replied Selina: "Mr. Addison has told us that 'a good face is a letter of recommendation,' yet I do not consider it as a proper object of vanity. It seems to me that the sense of the mind, or the beauty of the person, those things, in short, that we possess without an effort of our own, are not calculated to inspire conceit: what we give to ourselves by the voluntary cultivation of talents or of the moral virtues, appears to me a much more reasonable subject of self-gratulation. For why should we plume ourselves upon the enjoyment, or feel humiliated at the want, of that which it depended not upon us to obtain. I fear I am unequal to advise respecting your friend; but I should

think the best method would be to try to convince her how inferior are the charms of person compared to those of the mind; and to teach her to place her happiness upon the approbation of her own heart, not upon the flattery of others." "I have endeavoured," answered Mrs. Beauclerk, "as much as possible, to discourage in her the idea that she has more attractions than common." "Pardon me, madam," returned Miss Dudley, "if I think you judged wrong: to keep her in ignorance of that of which every fop will inform her, is a vain attempt. It is better to point out the snares in which beauty may involve her, and the little respect which it obtains when unaccompanied by more solid advantages. I have often wondered why the world is more indulgent to the boast of the qualities of the heart than to those of the mind or person; for, according to my idea,

greater vanity is implied in the first, as it is more our own work." "I believe that it is from an intuitive sense of the effects of each," observed Mrs. Barclay. "When people speak of their moral virtues, it may rouse in their hearers a desire to imitate them; but when they mention their natural superiority, the spirit of emulation is no more, for they know that the attempt must be futile." "By no means," said Miss Beauclerk, playfully: "for how many shine in borrowed charms, and mend nature by art!" "Mar her rather," replied Selina, in the same tone. "But I think, madam," addressing Mrs. Barclay, "that your observation is just; the subject never struck me in that light before." Mrs. Beauclerk now looked at her watch, and, surprised at the lateness of the hour, rose to depart, saying, "One so seldom meets with rational conversation, that in the enjoyment of

it time has flown unheeded." When Mrs. Barclay was once more alone with Selina, she took her hand, and pressing it affectionately, said, "Friend, thou improvest upon me every hour." Miss Dudley feelingly expressed the satisfaction which she experienced in Mrs. Barclay's good opinion, and returned home; still more anxious than before that her intimacy with the respectable quaker might be permanent.

When Selina made her appearance in Mrs. Vernon's drawing room, she was elegantly yet simply attired: her person was neither too much exposed, nor arrayed in statue-like drapery; for modesty was the constant attendant upon her toilet, and her delicacy would have been pained by the thought of exciting an impure desire. Mr. Villars and Mr. Milner, with a few more of both sexes, composed the dinner party. The former gentleman was placed on

one side of Miss Dudley, and Mr. Tresillian, the young ensign before mentioned, on the other: the latter thought proper, by way of shewing his gallantry, to pay her the most hyperbolical compliments. "I vow to Gad, madam, you are so superlatively beautiful," he exclaimed, "that I hardly dare trust myself to look at you! The brilliancy of your dark eyes is absolutely dazzling, and your auburn hair is the net of Cupid to entrap unwary hearts!" "Not so fast, my good sir," replied Selina, laughing; "you will exhaust all your eloquence at once; for surely the stores of your memory cannot supply you with much of this language, which you have, undoubtedly, gleaned out of some old romance." "O, I scorn to borrow," returned he; "it is original, I assure you." "I am sorry," answered Selina, "that it was not addressed to some one more capable of appreciating its value."

"Then you have no taste for panegyric?" said Mr. Villars, in a low voice: "half the girls in town would have been delighted with such a speech from Mr. Tresillian; you do not know, perhaps, that he tacks honourable to his name, and is heir to a barony." "Trifles, demme, trifles," cried the ensign, who overheard them; "I think nothing of them." "Nor I, I assure you," replied Selina, dryly. Mr. Tresillian turned away disconcerted, and transferred his attention to a lady, highly rouged, who was his neighbour on the other side. "You have completely silenced him," said Mr. Villars, laughing. "He is a mere child," observed Selina, "or I should have been offended at such barefaced flattery." "Your sentiments are singular," returned Mr. Villars, "and I think, according to the present fashionable manners, that is the highest praise

I can bestow upon them." In truth he had been struck at first sight with the beauty of Miss Dudley's person, and as her character unfolded, his admiration increased. In the evening Frederic came in, and when the parties were formed for cards, he had an opportunity of entertaining Selina. She told him of Miss Mordaunt's behaviour, and they agreed that she had most likely heard of her through the medium of Mr. Raynsford.

Hervey having been informed by Frederic of the inaccuracy of his friend's report, and of his own confirmed reliance on Selina's constancy, shrugged his shoulders, and said he was glad to hear it. In fact he found himself obliged to give up the attempt of separating them by jealousy, as entirely hopeless; but he continued to appear with him in public as much as possible, rightly judging that his character would

suffer from being seen in his company: and for any further effort he waited for Montague's directions.

Miss Dudley had now entered upon a scene of life entirely new to her, and, for a time, was amused by its novelty. Yet, though universally admired, she was not corrupted by flattery: general commendation did not satisfy her, unless she was conscious that it was deserved, nor render her less careful to regulate all her actions by the rule of duty. She was, at length, fatigued with the continual recurrence of the same parties, and often, after having superintended the preparations, spent with the quaker the evenings of Mrs. Vernon's routs. The prescribed fortnight had passed with increased esteem on both sides, when Mrs. Barclay was entrusted with the whole of Selina's history. Their conversations were frequently enlivened by the presence of Frederic, to whom

Mrs. Barclay had given a general invitation; and who was happy in the opportunity of meeting Selina at her house, as Mrs. Vernon did not appear to receive him with cordiality. The pleasures which he enjoyed at Heathdale were once more renewed; he read to the ladies while they worked, and from his lips "The poet's or historian's page," acquired new charms. Miss Mordaunt was cruelly mortified by his desertion, and railed at Miss Dudley, to Hervey, with redoubled acrimony.

Mrs. Vernon heard with vexation of Mr. Unwin's frequent visits to Mrs. Barclay; yet she did not venture to forbid Selina's going to her house, as she feared that it might be the means of her leaving her entirely; for she doubted not that the quaker would receive her with pleasure. She therefore explained to Dorian the state of affairs, and begged him to come to town. An illness

of Mr. Raynsford had alone detained him so long in the country, but his brother being now returned from Lisbon, he immediately obeyed the summons.

One morning, soon after breakfast, as Mrs. Vernon was lounging upon a sofa, and Selina was reading to her the last new novel, Montague made his appearance. He started with well affected surprise at seeing Miss Dudley, while the astonishment on her side was real, not unmingled with vexation. "Ah, my friend Dorian, how do you do?" said Mrs. Vernon, holding out her hand; "you have not been in town this age, I almost despaired of seeing you again." He complimented her upon her never-fading charms, and replied that he had been confined at home by his uncle's illness: then turning to Selina, he said, "This is indeed an unexpected pleasure, Miss Dudley. I heard that you were in London, but little thought of meeting

you at the house of an old acquaintance." "Well, what a careless creature I am!" exclaimed Mrs. Vernon, "I was really going to introduce you to each other, quite forgetting that you had resided in the same village." Mr. Dorian asked Selina if she did not enquire after her friends at Heathdale, adding that he had been at Mr. Unwin's two days before. Miss Dudley expressed a hope that they were well, saying that she had lately heard from Louisa. He replied that he did not think Miss Unwin had enjoyed her usual good spirits since her departure; indeed she appeared to have felt her loss severely, as all must have done who had once been happy in the pleasure of her society. "Then you ought to congratulate me who have possessed myself of the treasure at your expence," said Mrs. Vernon: "Miss Dudley now makes my house her home." "Believe

me," returned he, with apparently restrained emotion, "no one can be more sensible than myself of the satisfaction that you must enjoy with such a companion!" "Have you heard from your brother lately?" asked Selina, willing to turn the conversation. Montague answered that he had come home a few days before; no other circumstance would have induced him to leave his uncle at that time. Selina hoped that his brother had derived every benefit that could be expected from his voyage. "How kind it is in you to interest yourself in his happiness!" replied Dorian. "His health is certainly better, and his mind more composed, but I fear that he will never overcome his unfortunate attachment. His passions are too strong to listen to the voice of reason, and Heathdale may perhaps ruin all that Lisbon has done for him." "Surely not!" rejoined Selina: "if I may judge

from his enjoying the friendship of William Unwin, he will not indulge what would now be a criminal affection; nor think of Mrs. Fitzherbert as he did of Emma Neville. How is that lady; does she seem more reconciled to her fate than when I left Sussex." Montague replied that he had not seen much of her, but she looked melancholy; it was said that her husband had fallen into habits of dissipation and spent little of his time at home. "Unfortunate Emma," said Selina, with a sigh, "how must her gentle spirit be hurt at such conduct! United to a man whom she cannot even esteem, your brother's situation must be happiness compared to her's!" "For heaven's sake, good folks, do not sentimentalize at such a woeful rate," exclaimed Mrs. Vernon. "You will have time enough to talk over old stories, as I hope, Dorian, that you will spend your days, at least, with

us, while you stay in town. I suppose if I were to offer you a bed it might occasion scandal; for you know, in this improved age, there are no old women; or if there are, no eyes shoot Cupid's darts with so much success as those which are surmounted with wrinkles." Selina heard this cordial invitation with the utmost chagrin, and, willing to disclaim all interest in Montague's visits, said that she had made every enquiry which she wished concerning her Heathdale friends; there was therefore no occasion, on her account, to intrude on Mr. Dorian's time. Then, rising, she continued, "I promised to call on Mrs. Barclay this morning, if I had it in my power; and, as you are not now alone, with your leave, madam, I will take this opportunity." Montague felt heartily vexed with Mrs. Vernon for the well-meant zeal in his cause, by which she had alarmed Miss Dudley,

and, willing to do away the impression which her words had made, replied that he was sorry it would not be in his power to accept her friendly offer, as he had business to transact in town, which would occupy much of his time, though what little he had to spare he should be happy to devote to his old friend. Then, turning to Selina, he continued, "I hope I do not drive you away." "By no means," she returned; "had any other person come in I should have equally fulfilled my engagement."

"What hath disturbed thee, my young friend?" said the good quaker to Selina, as she entered. "Thy looks betray that something hath happened to make thee uneasy." "Are they such faithful interpreters of my thoughts?" replied Miss Dudley; sitting down by her, and pressing her offered hand between her own. "Alas, my dear madam, your friendship has quite

spoiled me! Formerly, under every disagreeable occurrence, I found a resource in the energies of my own mind, because I knew that I had no other dependence; but now I have been so accustomed to rely on your superior judgment, that I am no longer able to think for myself." "Thou mayst always command my best faculties in thy service," answered Mrs. Barclay, affectionately: "but fear not, shouldst thou be deprived of other assistance, that the Almighty will suffer thy own powers to forsake thee in the time of need. Tell me in what thou hast occasion for my counsel?" Selina related all that had passed between herself and Frederic concerning Montague; together with the latter's declaration of love, and his subsequent behaviour: then continued, "You may easily imagine my surprise and vexation upon seeing him enter this morning, and finding that he was

very intimate with Mrs. Vernon, when I had never heard her even mention his name. She gave him a very pressing invitation to spend every day with her while he remained in town; but he declined it, because, I have reason to think, he supposed that it would not be agreeable to me: indeed I do not believe that he entertains any hope of gaining my affection, or that I shall ever have cause to complain of his behaviour. It is not, therefore, from what relates to myself that my vexation arises, but I fear that if he be often at Mrs. Vernon's it will make Frederic unhappy. It is true that I ought to be displeased if he entertain any mistrust after what has passed; but I will frankly own, that my affection is too deeply rooted not to pardon in him this one fault, and I would willingly avoid the smallest occasion of giving him uneasiness. I certainly

cannot expect Mrs. Vernon to consult my wishes in the society which she cultivates, neither should I choose to enter, with her, upon the subject; we have no sentiments in common, and she would only laugh at my scruples; but I am thinking whether I ought to leave a house where I may be often exposed to the company of one whom Frederic considers as his rival." "I cannot believe thy lover so unreasonable as to wish thee to take such a step," replied Mrs. Barclay. "Although my neighbour Vernon is not every thing that thou couldst wish, yet she behaveth to thee with kindness, and in no situation of the sort art thou likely to have so much the command of thy own time: these are advantages which should not lightly be renounced. Wouldst thou that I should speak to our friend Frederic on the subject, if he cometh this evening to my dwelling?" "I should

be extremely obliged to you," said Selina, after a little consideration. "Tell him, that if it will be any satisfaction to him I will leave Mrs. Vernon, though I must own I should be sorry to do it; but that, if I remain, it will not be in my power pointedly to avoid Mr. Dorian. That would be treating him with injustice, for while he continues to behave with propriety to me, he has a right, on my part, to expect civility." "Thou art correct," returned Mrs. Barclay; "for no selfish consideration should we be unjust to others. Possibly he may not remain long in this great city." "I sincerely hope that he will not," answered Selina. "If you will give me leave I will stay here till he quits the house, and my future conduct shall be regulated by the result of your conference with Frederic."

While this conversation was passing

at Mrs. Barclay's, a very different one took place between Mrs. Vernon and Montague. "There she goes to her favourite quaker," exclaimed the former, as Miss Dudley shut the door. "Your beloved has an odd taste, Dorian; she prefers that primitive piece of starched quizicallity both to me and all the beaux who frequent my house; not excepting Mr. Villars, who, I really believe, is half in love with her." "Phoo, Villars is too much of an old bachelor to think of marrying," replied Montague, "and too vir-tu-ous," drawling out the word, "to keep a mistress. But tell me how you like Selina; is she not a lovely girl?" "So, so," returned Mrs. Vernon; "she has good eyes, but she does not know how to make use of them, and her manners are too repulsive. To tell you the truth I am tired of her, so the sooner you can contrive to take her off my hands the better. She is of too

independent a spirit; there is no influencing her to any thing that she thinks wrong; she gives her opinion on all subjects as freely as if she were in her own house: I am under perpetual restraint in her presence, and I cannot bear her for the involuntary respect which her deportment exacts." Dorian answered with a smile, "Indeed I did not believe that you were of very congenial dispositions; but in order to rid yourself of this incumbrance, it is absolutely necessary to think of some scheme which will make a breach between her and Frederic Unwin: till this is done I have no chance of gaining her favour. While he retains her good opinion, I am convinced that he will never lose her affection; therefore the only method is to lessen his character in her eyes, and this I am not without hopes of effecting by means of Hervey. It must be your business to in-

form her of the dissipated life which my friend leads, and to insinuate your fears that Frederic should be corrupted by his society. If she make enquiries she will find your account of Hervey confirmed; and, through him, I do not despair of convincing her of her favourite's immoralities by the evidence of her own senses." "You are a perfect Machiavel," replied Mrs. Vernon. "I am sure that you richly deserve her for all the trouble that you have taken." "I flatter myself that I do," answered Dorian: "although I am now actuated not only by love but revenge. I should be delighted to triumph in her affection, but neither heaven nor earth shall keep me from the possession of her person." Mrs. Vernon heartily wished him success, saying that her endeavours towards it should not be wanting. "I own it would gratify me highly," she

added, " to see her humbled; we should then hear no more of her high-flown maxims of morality." Dorian observed that they must be careful not to alarm her, cautioning Mrs. Vernon to give him no more invitations; he would come when he judged best, as now, that his love-sick brother was at Heathdale, he should have nothing to take him from town, and for his stay the excuse of business would always pass current. Their infernal plan, for the ruin of innocence, being thus digested, Montague took his leave.

That evening Miss Dudley was engaged to accompany Mrs. Vernon to a select party at Mrs. Beauclerk's, but early the next morning she repaired to Mrs. Barclay. " I ought to apologize," she began, " for intruding upon you at such an unseasonable hour, but I was afraid that if I did not come be-

fore Mrs. Vernon was up, I might not have an opportunity the whole day, and I am anxious to learn whether you saw Frederic last night." "Thou needest not an apology, my dear young friend," replied the worthy quaker, as she made room for her on the sofa; "thy company to me is always welcome. I have seen thy lover, and his sentiments answered my expectations." She had scarcely spoken when, to their mutual surprise, Frederic entered. "Will not this sofa hold three?" said he gaily, after he had paid them the compliments of the morning; then, seating himself by Selina, he continued, "I have been at Mrs. Vernon's, my dearest girl, and not finding you at home was at no loss to guess where you had flown: perhaps you will not believe that my impatience to reprove you has kept me from the counting house." "Indeed," answered

Selina, while her eyes confessed the joy which his presence communicated, "in what have I been so unfortunate as to deserve your displeasure?" "I do not say that you have deserved it," returned Frederic, "but, like most people, I am willing to lay the blame upon another, though only myself be in fault. I cannot but confess that I have merited your apprehensions of my jealousy, yet I am half angry that you should think me any longer such an unreasonable being. Indeed, my love, you wrong me if you suppose that I have not profited by the many happy hours which I have passed in your society since you have been in town: and so far am I from wishing you to leave Mrs. Vernon on Dorian's account, that I should not be uneasy were circumstances to oblige you to spend whole days in his company." Selina gave

him her hand, pleasure beaming from her expressive features while she replied, "I congratulate you, dear Frederic, as well as myself, upon the conquest that you have gained over the dæmon of suspicion: I am sorry that I have hurt your feelings by superfluous caution, and I trust that no occurrence will, in future, have power to disturb our mutual confidence." Frederic tenderly pressed her hand, with a look which denoted heartfelt gratitude and affection; then, turning to Mrs. Barclay, said, "Tell me, my dear madam, how I shall ever repay the love with which I am honoured by this estimable girl?" "By remaining such as thou art at present," she answered, "then wilt thou be worthy of her attachment. Ah my beloved friends," she continued, while the tear of remembrance trembled in her eye;

"how happy are ye that no obstacle of duty opposes your future prospects! Thou art surprised at my emotion," she added, as she observed the look of sympathy with which Selina regarded her: "it is no common misfortune which has overclouded the sunshine of my days; but thou shalt, in time, be made acquainted with my history. Now leave me, my friends; at this moment I am unfit for society. Frederic and Selina arose in silence; they felt the respect which her sorrow claimed, and complied with her request. Miss Dudley parted from her lover at Mrs. Vernon's door, and entering found her waiting for her to fill her accustomed office at the breakfast table.

To compensate for the vexation which Montague's visit had at first occasioned to Selina, she was soon

after more agreeably surprised by the arrival in town of Miss Unwin. We will look back to Heathdale, and see to what she owed this unexpected pleasure.

CHAP. V.

" Weak and irresolute is man;
" The purpose of to-day,
" Woven with pains into his plan,
" To-morrow rends away.

" The bow well bent and smart the spring,
" Vice seems already slain;
" But passion rudely snaps the string,
" And it revives again." COWPER.

ONE evening, as Louisa was sitting at work, and William was reading, to her and his father, Paley's able and judicious " View of the Evidences of Christianity," they were interrupted by the visit of a Mrs. Clarandel. This

lady was a distant relation of Mr. Unwin, whom he had not seen or heard of for many years. When very young she had made one of that numerous tribe of female adventurers who go out to the East Indies, and indelicately expose their charms to the purchase of the best bidder: her beauty attracted the notice of Mr. Clarandel, who had acquired a large fortune in the Company's service, and, though much older than herself, she accepted his hand. He died soon after their return to England. Since that time, though a long period had elapsed, she had made no enquiries after Mr. Unwin: he had lived at Heathdale before she went abroad, and now, stopping at Midhurst in her way from a visit to a friend, he first recurred to her recollection. She travelled with her own horses, and one of them having fallen lame, she determined, as it suited her convenience, to

pay a short visit at the parsonage. They all rose, on her entrance, with the surprise which the appearance of a perfect stranger was calculated to inspire; for it was impossible for Mr. Unwin to recognise in the tawny figure before him, who appeared to be nearly fifty, the fair and beautiful girl of sixteen, who had left England about three and twenty years before. But he was as little altered as was possible in that time, and Mrs. Clarandel knew him immediately. Advancing towards him with a smile, she said, "You do not recollect me, Mr. Unwin? indeed it is not wonderful that nine years residence in the burning climes of the East should have changed me so much as to prevent your retracing the features of your old acquaintance, Augusta Danvers." "Good heavens! is it possible?" cried Mr. Unwin, as he fixed his eyes upon her, vainly endeavouring to find out some resemblance

between what she had been and what she was. " Indeed, Madam, I should not have known you; but I am happy to see you again after so long a separation. Children let me introduce you to your cousin. Here are two strangers, Madam, who were not in being when you were last at Heathdale." William and Louisa advanced to pay their compliments and welcome her to the rectory. " Are these really your children, Mr. Unwin?" she exclaimed, after having returned their salutation: " how time flies! it seems but yesterday that, free from care, I used to run about wild in the woods of Cowdry." She now informed them of the accident which compelled her to stop at Midhurst, apologising for the unseasonable time of her visit by the plea that she was unwilling to delay the pleasure of seeing them. Mr. Unwin immediately invited her to stay with them till she was able

to proceed upon her journey, and she readily accepted the offer, but would not hear of incumbering him with her servants; they remained with her equipage at Midhurst. Mrs. Clarandel was sincere in the satisfaction which she expressed at revisiting Heathdale: for though the dissipation of London had chased from her mind the inhabitants of the parsonage, yet the sight of each well remembered object revived the unadulterated feelings of nature. The party having drawn their chairs round the fire, Mr. Unwin enquired of his guest by what name he was to address her, and she related her marriage with Mr. Clarandel, their return to England, and his subsequent decease; excusing herself in the best manner that she could for having dropt all intercourse with her relations for so many years: she then requested the particulars of Mr. Unwin's history since she had left

England. Thus, in talking over the stories of former days, the evening passed away.

There was an easy suavity, a sprightly frankness in Mrs. Clarandel's manners and conversation, which insensibly won upon the hearts of her auditors. Never had she appeared to more advantage than in the company of the good divine and his family; for, without any intention on her part, her sentiments usually took the tone of theirs whom she was with, and the society at the parsonage, congenial to virtue, called forth the best qualities of her heart. Her boundless spirits, unbroken even by misfortune and added years, made her without consideration the creature of circumstance, and an eager thirst of pleasure occasioned her to sacrifice many duties to its gratification. Yet the principles instilled into her mind by an excellent mother, whom she lost at an early age,

were not wholly obliterated, as she often regretted her want of resolution to quit the follies which her reason pointed out. Louisa was charmed with her, and when she returned from attending her to her apartment was loud in her praise. "My departed wife was very intimate with her mother," said Mr. Unwin, "and Mrs. Clarandel, before she went abroad, used to be much at Heathdale: she was then a most engaging girl, but volatile nearly to wildness. A desire of pleasure, which her limited fortune gave her not the means of pursuing in England, and a youthful hope of unrivalled admiration carried her to the East. All that I heard of her afterwards was, that she had married a man old enough to be her father; and I fear that she sacrificed the feelings of her heart to her predominant passion." "I should think so," replied William, "for, by her account, she was left a widow very

young, and had her marriage been happy she would probably have formed another engagement."

The next morning, the weather being fine, Mrs. Clarandel requested Louisa to accompany her in a ramble through the park and the adjacent plantations. "I am impatient," said she, "to see all the alterations which have taken place, particularly the ruins of Cowdry House, and to retrace every scene which witnessed my early pleasures. Perhaps you will think that [illegible] I had much taste for such gratifications, I should not so long have denied myself their enjoyment; but I don't know how it is, I believe that, like Araspes, I have two souls, and London has so much attraction that when there I can think of no other." Louisa answered that she should be happy to attend her; but suggested her fears that the wetness of the season would render the walk

fatiguing, if she were not accustomed to the exercise. "It is true that I am not much used to it," returned Mrs. Clarandel, putting on her pelisse; "but nothing is more invigorating than a hearty good will, and the thought of former times will inspire my former agility." William offered to accompany them, and, giving an arm to each, they sallied forth into the park. "I must, positively, come next summer," said Mrs. Clarandel, as they strolled by the side of the double range of chesnuts, "and behold this scene in all its beauty." The walk was long, and her young companions were much entertained by the liveliness of her remarks, and the good humour with which she recounted the adventures of her youthful days.

When Mrs. Clarandel first saw Louisa she was struck with the charms of her person and the expression of her countenance; becoming

more acquainted with her she was equally pleased with her amiable disposition and the *naivetè* of her manners. At the end of a week the state of her horse admitted of her return to town, but so happily had she passed the time that she could scarcely resolve to leave Heathdale, and determined to prevail upon Mr. Unwin to indulge her with Louisa's company, as the only means to lessen her regret at parting. Yet she almost feared that he would be unwilling to entrust his darling daughter to her care, and, with a doubting heart, made her attack one night after supper, when she had been exerting all her abilities for his entertainment. "I am sorry to tell you, my dear Mr. Unwin," she began, "that there is no longer any obstacle to oppose my return to town; yet I cannot think of quitting you without the utmost reluctance. You have really almost converted me

into a reasonable being, but if I leave all your family at once, I fear that I shall inevitably sink back into my former habits." "And why should you go at present?" he replied; "your society makes us all happy, and to quit us because it is in your power is cruel." Louisa begged her not to think of it; assuring her that they should be quite melancholy in her absence. "You are both very good," returned Mrs. Clarandel, affectionately pressing the hand which Miss Unwin had put into hers; "I should indeed be very sorry to depart from you, my lovely cousin, and, with your father's leave, I have been thinking of a scheme to prevent it, which promises, at the same time, to keep me in the paths of rationality. Surely," turning her speaking eyes upon Mr. Unwin, "you cannot resist this plea! Suffer me to take Louisa to town, and I will endeavour to repay to

her the kindness which I have here experienced." Miss Unwin, her cheeks glowing with pleasure at the proposal, cast a supplicating look at her father for his approbation. He saw that her heart was interested in his consent, and, though he did not like to trust her with such a giddy being as Mrs. Clarandel, was unwilling to check her hopes at once; he therefore intimated his reluctance to part with his Louisa, but promised that if Mrs. Clarandel would extend her visit he would consider of it. "No consideration, for heaven's sake!" cried she; "I cannot sleep till you have granted my request. I know the reason of your hesitation; you think that I shall corrupt her by my example, but indeed I will not: whatever faults I may possess, they do not proceed from a bad heart, and I should make it a point of conscience not to infect Louisa with my follies. But if you will put on

your considering cap, think how much benefit I shall derive from Louisa's society. Help me, my sweet girl, to persuade your father!" Louisa gazed in his countenance to know if she might join in the petition, and seeing an encouraging smile, said, "Indeed, my dear Sir, it would make me very happy!" "Well then I believe I must consent," replied Mr. Unwin, "but it shall be upon condition that Mrs. Clarandel remains with us some time longer." To this preliminary she readily agreed, not a little rejoiced at the success of her application, and her lengthened stay served but to increase the good opinion which the worthy clergyman had formed of her disposition. In fact her taste for the enjoyments of rational society improved daily, and she really believed herself that she should no more enter with pleasure into the inane pursuits of the

circle in which she had been used to move. Her inexhaustible flow of spirits, her bewitching candour, shedding a fascinating lustre over every thing she said or did, afforded endless entertainment to her friends: notwithstanding her faults it was impossible to help loving her, and when she quitted Heathdale, hiliarity seemed with her to have taken its departure.

Yet Mr. Unwin was not without a father's anxious fears in trusting his daughter to her care, nor did he fail, with paternal fondness, to bid Louisa beware of the dangers which haunt the exposed paths of life. " Remember, my beloved girl," he said, " that modesty is a female's brightest ornament, and let not the influence of fashion prevail upon you to forfeit it, either in dress or deportment. Shut your ears against the insinuations of flattery, and do not pride yourself upon

imputed virtues or accomplishments. The praise which we receive beyond our merit is apt to make us careless of deserving *that* which we find we can obtain without the self denials of duty: but let it not be so with you. Still recollect, that after your utmost efforts much must remain undone, and that there never can be real cause for vanity in the human breast. Beware, my child, of the encroachments of love; let me not have to lament your blasted hopes of happiness: guard every avenue of your heart, till you have gained the affection of a worthy man; let reason judge before you yield to the sway of passion. You need not blush, my Louisa; love, refined and pure, when fixed upon a virtuous object, is one of the most ennobling sensations of our nature: we are eager to imitate those perfections which the hand of fancy arrays in tenfold charms, and, in time, we assimulate ourselves to the character

which we admire. I would warn you only against an attachment ill-founded, or placed where there is no prospect of a return: grieved, indeed, should I be, were my Louisa to lose the spring of her soul in the sorrows of hopeless love!" Miss Unwin listened with respect to her father's cautions, at the same time that, with the confidence of youth, she flattered herself they would prove unnecessary. Her heart was elated with gay ideas of the pleasure that she should enjoy in the metropolis, and, delighted with the thought of meeting Frederic and Selina, she felt not the separation from her father and brother with the poignancy which she would otherwise have done.

As Mrs. Clarandel travelled with her own horses, they proceeded two stages on the first day. She intended to set out early the next morning, that they might reach London before it was

dark, for she dreaded to encounter robbers; but unable to break the enticing bands of sleep, it was ten o'clock before she joined Louisa at the breakfast table. Owing to this delay, the shades of night had already enveloped the earth when the travellers found themselves upon Wimbledon Common. "We shall certainly be robbed, my dear Louisa," cried Mrs. Clarandel, clinging to her as if for succour. Miss Unwin was not naturally courageous, but she had never been taught that fear was becoming; from the example of Miss Dudley she had endeavoured to conquer her timidity, and, though trembling herself, she attempted to reassure her companion. "Oh, heavens! we shall be murdered!" again exclaimed Mrs. Clarandel, as she saw though the gloom a horseman advancing towards them; but he passed without offering them the least molestation, and,

PAGE 151 TO 152 MISSING IN BOOK

that a house on the verge of the common might be a receptacle for robbers, and, half breathless with fear, she endeavoured to look through the joints of the shutters, when she was thunderstruck by the following words uttered by a female voice: "It is in vain that you plead for her, her doom is fixed and she must die." "Let us go, my dear Louisa!" said Mrs. Clarandel, scarcely able to support herself. "Stay a little," replied Miss Unwin, "we may have been mistaken in the import of her words; the men are by this time at a great distance, and where can we turn our steps?" During this conversation they had lost the answer to the above speech, which, however, they could distinguish was in a hoarser tone, and the woman rejoined, "Why should I not? she is entirely in my power, and no one can call me to account for using her as I please." "But

do you mean to destroy the gentleman?" asked another voice, which they now plainly perceived to be that of a man. "Heaven forbid!" returned the first; "there is too plentiful a scarcity of those animals for me to make away with one wantonly: as for the lady, I have no such motive for forbearance, and the end of her days is at hand." As she concluded they heard her rise, and Mrs. Clarandel, thinking that she was going to execute her bloody purpose, overcome with dread, screamed aloud.

While the trembling Louisa vainly endeavoured to remove her from the spot, for her limbs were stiffened with terror, the door opened, and a young man, genteely dressed, appeared at it with a candle in his hand. He looked round to discover from whom the scream proceeded, and seeing the ladies, advanced towards them: Louisa was then sup-

porting Mrs. Clarandel in her arms, for she was almost insensible. Perceiving their situation, the gentleman offered his assistance in the politest terms, begging leave to convey the fainting lady into the house, to which proposal Miss Unwin, whose late fears were overbalanced by apprehensions for her friend, readily assented. A young lady of a very pleasing appearance was standing at the parlour door, waiting in anxious suspense to learn from her brother the cause of the scream which had reached their ears, and directly busied herself in Mrs. Clarandel's recovery with such sympathizing eagerness, that Louisa almost doubted the evidence of her senses as to the words which she had overheard. Mr. Nugent enquired what circumstance had occasioned them to be out unprotected at such a late hour, and Miss Unwin was beginning to tell him of the accident

which they had met with, when Mrs. Clarandel opened her eyes, and, seeing strangers, cried in a faint voice, "Oh, take me away, Louisa, they will murder me!" "From whom does she apprehend danger?" asked Miss Nugent, while her brother soothed the fears of his guest; "not from us, surely?" Louisa was almost afraid to reply, but, unused to subterfuge, and reassured by the appearance of every thing around her, answered hesitatingly, "Mrs. Clarandel was alarmed by some words that we overheard as we stopped under your window, but we probably misunderstood their meaning." "That you did, most undoubtedly," returned Miss Nugent, bursting into a fit of laughter which she was unable to restrain. When she had a little recovered from the violence of her mirth, which was quite unaccountable to Louisa, she continued, addressing herself to Mrs. Clarandel,

" Come, my dear Madam, do not frighten yourself with groundless apprehensions; you shall not encounter the fate which I intend only for the heroine of my novel." The truth flashed at once upon Louisa's mind, and, while she related the speeches which they had heard, she could not help joining in the merriment which she occasioned. Mrs. Clarandel, too, felt her fears subside, as she recovered the perfect enjoyment of her senses; and listened with a smile to an explanation of the words which had caused her such serious alarm. " I was telling my brother," said Miss Nugent, " of the catastrophe with which I meant to finish my history, and he was objecting to the cruel destiny which I had harshly chalked out for my leading character, when I sportively made those replies which you so naturally misinterpreted. Little did I dream of the effect which they

would produce! Thus while I thought only of fancied disasters I had nearly given birth to a real calamity. But I hope, Madam," turning to Mrs. Clarandel, "that you will receive no material inconvenience from my nonsense." That lady assured her she already felt quite recovered, and doubted not that she should enjoy many a hearty laugh over the events of that evening. The travellers having related their adventures on the common, Mr. Nugent dispatched a man with a lanthorn to assist in searching for the horses, and then ordered some refreshments, which were the more acceptable as the ladies had intended reaching town to dinner, and it was already past the time when they had proposed being in Pall Mall.

After they had done honour to the provisions which had been set before them, the conversation turned upon Miss Nugent's employment; when finding that

she meant to publish the work by subscription, they both begged leave to set down their names. Miss Unwin asked if it was her first attempt, to which Miss Nugent replied that it was, adding, " To tell you the truth the dearness of the times has made my necessary expences exceed the bounds of my limited income; so I took it into my head to try my abilities as an authoress, in hopes of reputably increasing my current cash." "I should think that you must have found great difficulty in the task," said Mrs. Clarandel. "Much more than I expected, indeed," returned Miss Nugent. " When I began, flushed with hope and inspirited by novelty, I went on rapidly; but, in time, weariness and disgust stole over my labours; the powers of my mind seemed to forsake me, and for hours I have vainly striven to rouse my faculties to exertion. Those who have

never undertaken an employment of length, which they propose to finish at a certain period, are little aware of the difficulties with which perseverance is attended; any single act of self-denial, though ever so great, as it requires but one effort, I should think were easy in comparison. In the first case, temptations are continually recurring to renounce that, which it depends upon ourselves only to continue; but in the second, when the springs of the mind are once bent, the purpose is executed before they have time to relax, and when they do it is productive of no detriment, for the affair is over. Yet, though I have dwelt upon the inconveniences, I do not mean to infer that there are no pleasures attending my occupation. In a work of imagination, on which alone I am competent to speak, we have the power, as it were, of creating a new world; the happiness or misery, the

life or death of the characters which we give birth to, are entirely at our own disposal, and we enjoy the delights of absolute dominion in a greater degree than any potentate upon earth." "And do you not expect," said her brother, "like them to be called to account hereafter for an abuse of power?" "Certainly," replied Miss Nugent; "but I have no present opposition to clog the wheels of my government. I fear the reviewers, if, indeed, they condescend to notice me at all, will descant without mercy upon the inanity of my production, and tell me that my talents are more suited to handle a distaff than a pen; yet my intention will justify me to myself, and I hope that I shall conscientiously exclude every thing from my work which might incur the disapprobation of a Higher Power." "I heartily wish that you may meet with success," said Mrs. Claran-

del, "my endeavours shall not be wanting to procure you subscribers in the circle of my acquaintance."

The conversation was here interrupted by the arrival of the carriage; the servants, with the assistance of Mr. Nugent's man, having found the horses, and repaired the traces sufficiently to conduct them to town. The ladies now took leave of the brother and sister, with many acknowledgments of their civility, and proceeded slowly to Pall Mall. As they came in sight of Westminster Bridge, Louisa was delighted with the view of the arch formed by the double range of lamps: her former excursions had been confined to her own neighbourhood, and as she entered the vast metropolis of England, lighted up as it was at that time of the evening, the brilliancy of the spectacle exceeded every idea which her imagination had formed. Mrs. Clarandel en-

joyed the surprise and admiration of her young friend; and when they stopped at her house, with pardonable vanity, endeavoured to increase it by shewing her through the rooms, sumptuously furnished with all the luxury of eastern magnificence. When they had finished this survey, in which Louisa had not been sparing of her commendations, they returned to the drawing-room, where Mrs. Clarandel affectionately embraced her guest, and kindly welcomed her to her new residence. "I will absolutely renounce my former dissipated course of life, my dear girl," said she, "and try, with your assistance, to cultivate the taste for rationality which I acquired at Heathdale." So Mrs. Clarandel said, and so she thought:—we shall see how well she kept her resolution. Miss Unwin now expatiated upon the pleasure which she promised herself in surprising her brother and

Selina; to whom, for that reason, she had not written word of her intended journey. Mrs. Clarandel had been told of their engagement, but had heard nothing of Miss Dudley's history previous to her arrival at Heathdale; her secret having been entrusted to those who knew and practised the duty of retention. She replied to Louisa that she visited the Mordaunt's, though not Mrs. Vernon, but she should be happy to see Selina, whose character, as given by her friend, had raised in her an earnest desire for her acquaintance. She concluded by begging that Louisa would take the carriage the next morning, as early as she pleased, and bring Miss Dudley home to dinner; a permission which was thankfully accepted by Miss Unwin.

CHAP. VI.

" Of friendship's fairest fruits, the fruit most
" fair
" Is virtue kindling at a rival fire,
" And, emulously, rapid in her race.—
" Thoughts disentangle, passing o'er the lip;—
" Thought, too, deliver'd, is the more possess'd;—
" 'Tis converse qualifies for solitude;
" As exercise, for salutary rest."

YOUNG.

THE more Miss Dudley saw of Mrs. Vernon, the less she was pleased with her; for, notwithstanding all the art of the latter, her real principles would sometimes break forth from the cloud of dissimulation; and Selina was musing, in a melancholy humour, upon the

dissimilarity of their sentiments, when Louisa arrived. In a moment, all her sombre reflections were put to flight, and, uttering an exclamation of joyful surprise, she rushed into the arms of her friend, by whom her embrace was returned with the most heartfelt satisfaction. "Good Heaven! my dear Louisa," cried Miss Dudley, "how little did I think of seeing you in town! tell me what has procured me this unexpected happiness: how did you leave your worthy father, and the estimable William?" "They are well, my dearest girl, or I should not have left them," replied Miss Unwin. "But you look grave: ah, Selina! you do not feel equal transport with me at this meeting." "Do I not?" said Miss Dudley, affectionately pressing her hand: "it was the unlooked-for pleasure which I experienced that made me thoughtful. I was suffering a pang of

self-reproach, for giving way to melancholy, because Mrs. Vernon was not such as my Louisa, at the very time when Providence was preparing for me the blessing of your society. But, dismissing all grave reflections for the present, inform me how you came to London."

Miss Unwin gave her an account of Mrs. Clarandel's visit to Heathdale, and its consequences, painting her cousin's character in the glowing colours of partiality: she then turned the discourse upon Mrs. Vernon, expressing an anxious wish that Miss Dudley would accompany her back to the rectory; as she was sure, from what she had said, that she was not happy in her present situation. Selina told her, that the recent reverse of her feelings would be a lesson to her as long as she lived; and that she must not judge of the general tenour of her mind from

the humour in which she had found her. "Let me entreat you, my dear girl," she continued, "not to mention again my returning to Heathdale: the objections I first made continue in full force; and my repugnance to become a burden upon your family is as strong as ever. Do not fancy that I am unhappy, for the inconveniences that I experience are overbalanced by other circumstances." She then related her intimacy with Mrs. Barclay; and the two friends talked over every occurrence which had happened to each since they parted, with the sweet confidence of mutual affection. They were at length interrupted by the arrival of Mrs. Vernon's carriage. "How the time has flown!" exclaimed Miss Unwin, looking at her watch. "I was sent to invite you to dinner, my dear Selina; will you get ready while I call on my brother, and I will come back for you

again." To this proposal Miss Dudley agreed, and Louisa left the house without being introduced to Mrs. Vernon, whom she passed in the hall. When Miss Unwin was gone, Selina mentioned the invitation which she had received, and her intention of accepting it, if she was not wanted at home. Mrs. Vernon said, that she never wished to lay her under any restraint in the disposal of her time, and asked if Mr. Unwin was to be of the party. Miss Dudley replied, that she really did not know: his sister was gone to call upon him. "It is a thousand pities," remarked Mrs. Vernon, "that such an excellent young man should have formed an intimacy with one so dissipated as Hervey: he must have more than common virtue, if he preserve himself uncontaminated in such society." "I fancy you must be mistaken in Mr. Hervey's character, Madam," answer-

ed Selina, gravely: " were he what you describe, he never could have gained Mr. Unwin's friendship." "You are young, my dear Miss Dudley," returned Mrs. Vernon, " and are not aware of the many engaging shapes which vice assumes to cover its deformity. It is my affection for you which urges me to disclose what I have heard, from good authority, of Mr. Unwin's friend. He games high, drinks hard, and makes it his boast that he has brought more beautiful girls upon the town than any young man of his standing: for your sake, I heartily wish that such society may not have its usual effect upon Mr. Unwin." " I am obliged to you, Madam," replied Selina, coldly; " but I believe it is time for me to dress, or I shall make Miss Unwin wait." " What an unmanageable spirit!" cried Mrs. Vernon, as she left the room: " I don't know

what Dorian will do with her; but, for my part, I wish she were fairly off my hands." In fact, Miss Dudley had long observed that Mrs. Vernon was prejudiced against Frederic; therefore what she said either of him or his acquaintance, had little weight upon her mind.

When Louisa returned, she was alone, and, upon Selina's joining her in the carriage, told her that Frederic was not at home; but she had left a message, requesting his company at Mrs. Clarandel's. "How he will wonder, my dear Selina, when he receives it!" continued Miss Unwin; "for I dare say he never heard of Mrs. C. in his life; at least I am sure that he never saw her." Thus, in the gaiety of her heart, she entertained herself the rest of the way with conjecturing what Frederic would think and say upon such an extraordinary

invitation. When they reached Mrs. Clarandel's, they found her, to Louisa's infinite surprise, surrounded by a large circle of both sexes; to whom she was eagerly listening while they detailed the various occurrences which had taken place in the fashionable world since she left town.

She met the friends upon their entrance, and declaring her happiness at seeing Miss Dudley, conducted her, with polite attention, to a seat next her own. As they passed along, she said, in a low voice, to Louisa, "I found myself so dull, after you went, that I could not help opening my doors, and see what an inundation has poured upon me."

The arrival of the ladies seemed as a signal for the company to depart, for they rose immediately; most of them expressing their hopes of meeting Mrs. Clarandel and her guest at a private

ball, given by one of the party the ensuing night; declaring that she was the life of every circle in which she appeared, and they had all been vapoured to death in her absence. "You see how it is, my dear Louisa," cried Mrs. Clarandel, when they were gone; "I have all the inclination in the world to be a quiet, good, domesticated creature; but nature has unhappily endowed me with such amusing talents, that the world will not suffer me to rest in peace. I am, positively, as much sought after as was, formerly, the philosopher's stone, and my seclusion would be like the touch of the torpedo to the fashionable circles. Upon my word," continued she, surveying herself in the glass, "if this faithful monitor did not remind me of the deepening tints that my complexion has received from the sun of the east, which sheds intolerable day, I should fancy myself

as young and fair as when I left Britain." Then, turning to Selina, she added, "I am afraid, my dear Miss Dudley, that you will think me mad; but I hope Louisa gave you warning that she was bringing you to the house of a strange animal. I do assure you, though I am often troubled with these fits, that I have sometimes intervals of rationality; of which I cannot give you a stronger proof than my having been flattered by this good girl, and her family, that my presence at Heathdale compensated, in some measure, for your absence." The ease of Mrs. Clarandel's manners made all restraint vanish in her company, and she seemed at first sight, like an old acquaintance. Selina replied, with a smile, "I must, at least, Madam, give you credit for a well-turned compliment; but you need not fear alarming me by your vivacity, as I am too young to be cynical: your

having won the affection of my friend is, to me, a strong argument in your favour." "Ah! I see you, as well as the rest, are inclined to spoil me," returned she: "but, Louisa, I forgot my dear Frederic! why did you not bring him with you? Formal creature! I suppose, because I did not mention it: it is impossible to think of every thing; and, I assure you, I quite expected him." Louisa told her, that she gave her credit for the intention, but he was not at home: she then informed her of the message which she had left. "Oh! you mischievous girl," cried Mrs. Clarandel; "I shall infallibly lose my character: it will be reported all over the town that I make private assignations with strangers at my own house. Yet, what woman of spirit would not hazard reputation for the sake of seeing a pretty fellow? and I understand that your brother is hand-

some as an Apollo. You must know, Miss Dudley, I am prodigiously apt to fall in love; and though I was delighted with William Unwin, I have a presentiment that Frederic will be still more to my taste. Do you not tremble at the thought of so formidable a rival?" "Indeed," replied Selina, "if he be not as constant as was Orpheus to the memory of Euridice, I have little chance. Miss Mordaunt has already attacked him, and now you threaten to enter the lists for conquest! Alas, poor Selina!" "I can see, through this veil of fear, that you are mightily unconcerned," returned Mrs. Clarandel: "but do not be too secure, I am just at the irresistible age; for, notwithstanding my appearing a dozen years older, I am not quite forty. Oh, Jupiter, there is a rap at the door! I must fly and put on all my arms, or I shall not succeed." So saying, she

gaily withdrew to her toilet, and immediately after Frederic was announced.

He entered with a grave air of expectation, as thinking to see a total stranger, which was turned into delighted astonishment, as his sister flew to his embrace, and welcomed him to Pall Mall. "And you too, my dear Selina!" cried he, taking her hand, "how am I to account for this joyful and unexpected meeting?" "Let us all sit down," said Louisa, "and then, my dear brother, I will explain to you the whole mystery." He seated himself between them, and holding a hand of each, declared that he was as happy as curiosity would permit. "In the first place, then," began Louisa, putting on a grave face, "you must congratulate me on having taken up my residence in this elegant house. What would you say if I were the Mrs. Clarandel who requested your company in

Pall Mall?" "I should say that you had conducted the affair very secretly," answered Frederic, looking half credulously in her face for the truth of her assertion: then turning to Selina, and seeing a smile upon her countenance, he added, "but you are trying to impose upon me." "I do assure you," replied his sister, "that I consider myself here as at home, and it was from me that you received the invitation. Did you not hear of the handsome chariot in which I figured to Lombard Street?" "Do, my love," said Frederic, addressing Miss Dudley, "tell me how far I may give credit to this teasing girl." Selina told him that it was indeed Louisa who had called at Mr. Mordaunt's; but confessed she was at a loss to imagine how she could be married, as she never had heard of a *Mr.* Clarandel. "Well, I am determined not to ask another question,"

cried he, throwing himself back in his chair. "I know my sister longs to tell me, and I will punish her by my perfect indifference on the subject." Louisa replied, that it was only compassion for him which induced her to open her lips, or indeed the fear that he should not meet the real Mrs. Clarandel with proper respect. She then told him of their cousin's unexpected visit to Heathdale, related what she knew of her history, and ended with their adventures on the road to town. She had hardly finished when Mrs. Clarandel made her appearance. She welcomed Frederic with her usual vivacity, and laughed heartily at Louisa's account of the imposition which she had endeavoured to practise. After dinner, which passed in cheerful sallies of gaiety, the effect of light spirits and congenial society, they all seated themselves round the fire. "Now," said

Mrs. Clarandel, "we will set in for a conversazione; for you must not suppose that I am wholly disinterested in collecting the present party. I am for discussing the merits of perseverance in a first attachment," added she, smiling archly at Miss Dudley. They all gave their opinions on the subject; and the lively widow maintained that nothing could excuse inconstancy, in either sex, after there had once been a delaration or acknowledgment of love. This was denied by Selina, who brought cogent arguments to prove that, in many cases, relinquishing a first attachment was not only excusable but praiseworthy. The combat was sustained with spirit on both sides, but the victory rested with Miss Dudley. "How I admire your sentiment, that constancy is meritorious only when founded on virtue!" said Frederic, in a low voice, to Selina, "And though,

if I were to deserve it, you would doubtless put it in force with regard to me; yet, amid the horrors of remorse, I should still acknowledge your justice." "God forbid!" replied Miss Dudley, "that I should ever be called upon to exert my fortitude on such an occasion: but I have too great a reliance on your virtue, to believe it possible." Frederic pressed her hand in silence, and said more in one look than could have been conveyed by a thousand words.

The social party next chatted over the adventures of Mrs. Clarandel and Louisa on Wimbledon Common; and the former said that she had not forgotten, that morning, to recommend Miss Nugent's book to the company. "Though I really owe it no good will," she continued; "for it was the cause of my receiving a greater fright than I ever remember to have experienced." They next talked of the

beautiful scenery of Sussex; Mrs. Clarandel expatiating in her lively way, though with a good deal of feeling, upon the happy hours which she had passed at Heathdale in her youth. "But the poor village is now almost deserted," continued she, "and here am I enjoying myself with its former inhabitants. Yet I do hope, if I should have the pleasure of seeing it again next summer, (which my worthy cousin pressed me to do), that you, my dear Miss Dudley, will be of the party." "Surely," said Frederic, "Selina will not refuse to pay my family a visit. I, too, when the town is empty, shall have it in my power to greet once more my household gods." Miss Dudley replied, that it would make her very happy to spend a few weeks at the parsonage, and, with Mrs. Vernon's permission, she certainly would. "I hope," added she, "that we shall all

enjoy the beauties of the country together." Thus did they look forward to a meeting at Heathdale, little thinking of the interesting events which were to take place before that period. The rest of the evening was spent in cheerful conversation, and, soon after eleven, Frederic accompanied Selina home in Mrs. Clarandel's carriage.

On their way, they talked of their new acquaintance, and both concurred in thinking her amiable and highly agreeable. "Whatever she might be formerly," said Miss Dudley, "she is now certainly plain, yet her countenance is so animated, that it pleases more than beauty. I understand, from her own confession, that she devotes a larger share of her time to dissipation than is perfectly right: yet I cannot wonder at it; for I dare say that she is so universally admired as to make the temptation almost irresistible." "Your

charitable judgment of Mrs. Clarandel," replied Frederic, "shews that you are 'to others kind, as to yourself severe.' You have, at least, equal temptations to dissipation, for you live in the midst of it; yet you pass your time as a rational being, who is accountable for the employment of every hour." "According to our opportunities of improvement we should be judged," answered Selina. "I have heard that Mrs. Clarandel lost her mother when very young: probably she had no Mrs. Willoughby to strengthen her mind, and enable her to resist with firmness the innovations of error. Whatever I am, I have no merit of my own; under God, I owe all to my beloved benefactress."

While Frederic and Selina were thus discoursing of Mrs. Clarandel, they were themselves the subject of conversation between her and Louisa.

The former declared young Unwin was a most charming fellow; "and as for Miss Dudley," said she, "her mind shines out in every word and look: she has indeed a soul-illumined countenance! I am half afraid of her virtues, she is so provokingly superior; at the same time that I cannot help loving her in spite of envy. I think, if she were my companion, I should never dare to act wrong. Now, though you are a very good girl, my dear Louisa, yet I do not feel such a dread of your being acquainted with my faults, as I do with regard to Miss Dudley." "It is because my face is round," replied Miss Unwin, laughing, "which gives me such an unfortunate air of good-nature, that nobody cares what they say or do in my presence: whereas Selina's being oval, diffuses so much sense over her features, that she appears more formidable than she

really is. I assure you that she is no more severe in her judgment of others than if she were herself the most imperfect creature in the universe. You need not fear raising my jealousy by praising her; there is nothing which gives me half so much delight, and I should be vain indeed if I thought myself equal to my friend."

CHAP. VII.

" Unskilful he to fawn, or seek for power,
" By doctrines fashion'd to the varying hour;
" Far other aims his heart had learn'd to
" prize,
" More bent to raise the wretched than to
" rise."

GOLDSMITH.

THE next day Mrs. Clarandel ordering herself to be denied, as she intended to go out in the course of the morning, sat down to work with Louisa; when she gave the latter an account of the general character of her acquaint-

ance. " I believe, after all," said she, " that I am more courted for the splendour of my entertainments than the agreeableness of my society; but, for the consolation of my vanity, I persuade myself that all the single beaux, who frequent my house, are my ardent admirers. Nevertheless, I will spare you one or two; for I must absolutely engage you a husband before you leave town: what would all your neighbours say, if you were to return as much at liberty as when you left Heathdale?" " I am afraid," replied Louisa, " that none of the men of fashion, whom you have been describing, will be much to my taste; for I have antediluvian notions of marrying with a view to domestic happiness. However, I need not distress myself violently on that account, as it is hardly likely that they should think of incumbering themselves with a simple coun-

try girl." "I know one young man, who, in himself, would just suit you," returned Mrs. Clarandel; "but, unluckily, he is out of favour with Plutus, and, on that account, I fear is doomed to live and die in single blessedness. The Reverend Percival Benezet, of whom I speak, is curate of this parish: he is, really, an amiable creature, and has been peculiarly unfortunate, for which reason, I have given him a general invitation to my house. He was adopted, as I have heard, when quite a child, by a gentleman of great respectability, by whom he was brought up with the tenderness of a father. This Mr. Benezet, having children of his own, was unable to provide for him except in the church, for which he gave him an education; intending, when he was of a proper age, to present him to a valuable living. But, alas! before that time, the

good gentleman died; and his eldest son, who had always regarded poor Benezet with envy, gratified his malice by disposing otherwise of the benefice. As I live," continued Mrs. Clarandel, looking out of the window, "there he is upon the steps! I will run out, and order him to be admitted." She presently returned with him, saying, "Give me leave to introduce you to Miss Unwin, daughter of the Reverend William Unwin, of Heathdale, in the county of Sussex. I think fit to be thus particular, because this dear girl will make me a long visit, and therefore you will see a good deal of each other. Louisa, Mr. Benezet, my particular friend." Miss Unwin blushed, and was a little disconcerted by her cousin's lively sally; while Mr. Benezet paid her his compliments, and thanked Mrs. Clarandel for introducing him so favourably. Percival Benezet was a

pleasing, but not a handsome young man ; to his expressive dark eyes only belonged the praise of beauty, but there was a shade of melancholy in his face which rendered it interesting. His manners were singularly modest and unobtrusive ; and Louisa, as she took a timid survey of his person, breathed a generous wish that his future prospects were more bright than she had heard them represented.

"Well, my good friend," said Mrs. Clarandel, "how have you proceeded since I left town? For myself, I assure you I am vastly improved ; grown so steady, you have no idea! Would you believe it,—during the last fortnight that I spent in the country, I never once thought of ennui, notwithstanding the dull season of the year! Could such a phenomenon have happened at any place but Heathdale, or in other society than that of this dear

girl and her family?" "If the mind speaks in the countenance," replied Mr. Benezet, "as, I think, it generally does, I am not surprised that Miss Unwin's company should have had such an effect." "My dear Madam," said Louisa, her colour heightening as she spoke, "you do not consider how much hurt you do me by this eulogium: you raise Mr. Benezet's expectations so high, that they must infallibly be disappointed." Percival replied, he was persuaded that was impossible; while his fine eyes expressed his admiration of the ingenuous modesty visible in her air and manner. "But you have not told me, Benezet," cried Mrs. Clarandel, "how you have contrived to exist without me: what! have you not one poor compliment with which to greet my famished ears! Ah, faithless creature! though I told you, long ago, that you should be my second, yet, I dare say, in my ab-

sence, the charms of a fairer complexion have won you from your allegiance!" "How can you suppose so?" answered Mr. Benezet: "I think I could not give a greater proof of my constancy than in calling the moment that I heard you were in town; and I assure you, I have impatiently waited for your arrival; not only for my own sake, but that of others. The high price of provisions, this winter, has borne particularly hard upon my poor neighbours; thus I depended upon your beneficence, my dear Madam, to compensate for the scanty means which providence has given me, of affording them assistance." "Oh, miserable!" exclaimed Mrs. Clarandel; "how could such a strange idea enter your head, as that of a woman of fashion being charitable? at least in any other way than that of placing her name in the list of a public subscription. Why,

the reputation of it would be enough to exclude me from all the tonnish circles. What do you think of it, Louisa ?" "I think," replied she, "that Mr. Benezet could not have paid you a higher compliment, (and you know you were complaining of his omissions in that respect,) than in giving you credit for being unlike most women of fashion." "Indeed," said Percival, "I have always thought Mrs. Clarandel, pardon me, Madam, possessed of several qualities quite superfluous for the character which she has adopted. Of what use is the goodness of her heart in the tonnish circles, where personal accomplishments only are regarded? But in domestic life, in rational society, the first would shine in its proper light, and be rendered a thousand times more pleasing by the graces of the second." "Oh, you flatterer!" returned Mrs. Clarandel: "upon my word, you make me

fancy that I should appear so amiable in the situation which you describe, that I shall certainly, some time or other, retire into the country, and, as Lady Grace says, live soberly. But tell me what demand you wish to make upon my purse?" "There is a poor family in the most pitiable state of distress," answered Mr. Benezet, "who not belonging to this parish, can expect from it no relief. In their behalf I particularly wish to engage your compassion. The woman lay in of her seventh child about a month ago; but, being in want of the common necessaries of life, she has continued so weak ever since, as to be totally incapable of doing any thing towards the support of the helpless babes who cry around her for bread." "Poor creatures!" cried Mrs. Clarandel; "they are starving, and I am rolling in affluence!" She took out her purse, while Louisa expressed her pity

for the wretched mother, and enquired where she lived. He gave her the direction, then added, "You who have resided in the country, Miss Unwin, can form no idea of the many deplorable scenes exhibited in this vast metropolis. Distressed objects are lost in the crowd; and I verily believe that numbers have perished this winter from mere want; unrelieved, because unnoticed." "Heavens! how shocking!" cried Louisa, the compassion which she felt, strongly depicted in her countenance. Mrs. Clarandel offered Benezet a guinea, begging that he would be her almoner; but he declined taking it, saying, "Pardon me, Madam, if I venture to wish that you would, yourself, pay them a visit: you would then be the best judge how to apply your assistance in the most useful way." "Will you call, then, to-morrow morning?" returned Mrs. Clarandel, "and I will

accompany you." To this proposal, Percival agreed with pleasure; hoping, that if she were an eye-witness of the extreme misery under which the family laboured, she might be induced to stand their permanent friend. He thought, too, that the scene might be of service to her heart, and teach her to retrench the luxury which wasted in thoughtless extravagance what would give bread to numbers.

Mrs. Clarandel, now ordering her carriage, told Mr. Benezet that he should go with them to assist their taste in choosing ribbons and flowers: to which he replied, that he could not deny himself the pleasure of their company, but was afraid that they would find him entirely out of his sphere. He then asked Louisa whether the appearance of London had answered her expectations; and, till the carriage was ready, the conversation turned upon the various

amusements which were opening before her with all the charms of novelty. When they returned from their excursion, Mrs. Clarandel insisted upon Percival staying dinner; and it was not till the ladies were again seated in the carriage, to fulfil their evening engagement, that she had an opportunity of asking Louisa's opinion of her new acquaintance. "He appears, as you described him, very amiable," she replied; "and there is something in the tone of his voice which speaks to the heart more than any I ever heard." "Upon my word, Louisa," cried Mrs. Clarandel, laughing, "I am afraid you are far gone! Has he, so soon, spoken to your heart, my sweet cousin?" "How ridiculous!" returned she; "I merely meant that his tones were impressive. Believe me, my heart is not such a runagate as to be lost at a first interview." "Nay, I say nothing,"

answered Mrs. Clarandel, with provoking archness, "only this warmth is rather symptomatic. But, however that may be, I am sure, to judge from his eyes, and they are tolerably expressive, you stand a fair chance of rivalling me in his good graces." "I thought that he hardly looked at me," said Louisa. "You mean that you hardly looked at him," rejoined Mrs. Clarandel: "you seemed afraid to lift your eyes from the ground; and then you blushed so prettily! Ah, Louisa! Louisa! what am I to conclude from these signs and tokens?"

Thus did the lively widow amuse herself with twisting Miss Unwin's words according to her own fancy, till they arrived at the place of their destination. Louisa, being a new face, and the protogée of the rich Mrs. Clarandel, was universally noticed: her little heart bounded with delight. She was

extremely fond of dancing; and when she had overcome the timidity which entering so large an assembly at first inspired, she enjoyed the evening exceedingly. Young, and new to the world, it was no wonder that she was caught by the fascination of external appearance, and that she began to think there were more charms in what was commonly called dissipation, than she had hitherto imagined. The love of pleasure is natural to the youthful mind, and then only blameable when carried to excess. The company did not separate till a very late, or rather an early hour; in consequence of which, the two ladies did not meet at breakfast till the morning was far advanced. They had not finished their repast, when Mr. Benezet made his appearance. He enquired concerning their last night's amusement; when Louisa expatiated with so much delight upon the pleasure

which she had enjoyed, that he began to fear her mind would be warped from its original rectitude, by the pernicious influence of example. "How pitiable," said he to himself, "that such a heart as her's appears, such ingenuous modesty, should be perverted! O, that it were in my power, with a guardian hand, to snatch her from the vortex which seems ready to ingulph her!" Such was Percival's silent aspiration as he listened to Miss Unwin's animated account. He sat in silent expectation of Mrs. Clarandel proposing to accompany him to the destined objects of her bounty; but finding that he waited in vain, he at length ventured to remind her of her promise. With an air of confusion, which she endeavoured to laugh off, she replied, "You know I have the worst memory in the world, and the gaiety of last night put these poor people quite out of my head: so

I made an engagement to meet a large party at the exhibition of pictures in this street, and I expect some gentlemen every minute to attend us thither. I am really very sorry, but I will go the first hour that I am at leisure. When that will be, heaven knows! for it was impossible to refuse the various invitations which I received; and if I were to shut up my doors, people would think I was going to turn methodist." Louisa had not before heard of the exhibition party, and her first emotion, at the mention of it, was delight. But she observed, with pain, the chagrin visible on Percival's countenance. The distress which he had described recurred to her mind, and she reflected how much better she could do without seeing the pictures, than the poor people without the assistance of which they stood in such pressing need. She therefore said, in a hesitating voice, for she

was half afraid that Mrs. Clarandel would ridicule her for the proposal, "If you will allow me, my dear Madam, to be your substitute, I can take Mrs. Judith for my companion, and visit this wretched family, while you are fulfilling your engagement." Percival's eyes had been watching the expression of Miss Unwin's countenance from the time that Mrs. Clarandel spoke, and they now brightened with pleasure. "But what shall I say to your admirer, Sir Henry Temple?" enquired Mrs. Clarandel; "he will be quite in despair when he finds that you are not of the party." "My admirer!" repeated Louisa, while her eyes bent beneath Mr. Benezet's enquiring look: "my dear Madam, your fancy runs wild this morning! But perhaps the gentlemen will soon be here," added she, rising; "and I had better set out before they come." "Well, if you are

determined to make me blush by so much exceeding me in self-denial," answered Mrs. Clarandel, "you must even go. But why should not Benezet attend you? he can direct you to the place better than Judith." Percival immediately begged that he might have the pleasure of being her escort; and her cousin gave her the guinea, which she had before offered to him. Louisa suggested, that it might perhaps do them more good, if given at twice; when Mrs. Clarandel desired her to do as she pleased in that respect, saying, that she would order some proper food to be got ready for the poor woman against their return.

Mr. Benezet and Louisa now set out on their expedition. They were but just in time; for before they had walked half the length of the street, the gentlemen, whom Mrs. Clarandel expected, rapped at the door. "How much is it to be lamented,"

observed Percival, "that our good friend should resign herself so wholly to the pursuit of pleasure: it swallows up, as is generally the case, all the nobler qualities of her heart, and allows her no time for rational employment." "Had you seen her at Heathdale," replied Louisa, "she would have met your unqualified approbation." "I can easily believe it," returned Mr. Benezet; "she wants nothing to render her perfectly amiable, but to be out of the way of temptation: yet, how much greater is the virtue that can resist it! There are few young ladies who, like Miss Unwin, would give up an amusement, heightened by novelty, for the purpose of comforting the afflicted." "If I continue to follow my dear father's precepts," said Louisa, "I shall think no pleasure equal to the performance of my duty." "Will you allow me," replied Percival, "to breathe a wish that

your sentiments may not be altered by your residence in town. You will meet with so few who will not be inclined to ridicule them, that I tremble for their stability." Louisa expressed a hope that he would have no reason; and thought, at the moment, that she would give up any thing rather than forfeit his good opinion: yet she was conscious of no motive for so doing, but the esteem with which his character had inspired her. Their walk was short; but what a scene of distress presented itself when they reached the garret that contained the wretched family which they came to visit! The children, half naked, and the pictures of famine, were huddled up together round the fire; while the poor woman herself, whose appearance denoted the state of her health, was sitting upon the bed, with her baby, wrapped in a tattered cloak, upon her lap. "How do you

do, my good woman?" said Mr. Benezet. "God bless you, Sir! very badly," she replied: "if it had not been for your kindness, I don't know how I should have held it out so long!" Louisa sat down by her, and, in the most soothing tone of compassion, made several enquiries concerning her situation. Superior to fastidiousness, she took the baby in her arms, and, as she leaned over it, with looks of heartfelt pity, she appeared like an angel descended from heaven to succour the distressed! Percival viewed her with admiration, and repeated his prayers that her intercourse with the world might never harden her heart, or render her less amiable than at that moment. When the poor woman was presented by Miss Unwin with half of Mrs. Clarandel's bounty, and told from whom it came, she seemed scarcely to believe her senses that so large a sum

was in her possession; and broke forth into such exclamations of joy and gratitude as affected Louisa even to tears. After noticing the children, and promising to call again, they took leave. On their way back, Percival remarked that Miss Unwin had not mentioned Mrs. Clarandel's intention of sending them some sustenance: to which Louisa replied, that she had not, because she was afraid her cousin should forget to order it; and she was unwilling to raise expectations which might be disappointed. "How considerate was that reflection!" answered he: "what pleasure Mrs. Clarandel has lost by refusing to accompany us! I do not believe that you looked half so charming last night at the ball, as you did with that little ragged child in your arms." "I do assure you," said Miss Unwin, "I feel no regret at having absented myself from the exhibition-party this

morning: the sight of the pictures could not have given me so much delight as I felt in witnessing that poor woman's gratitude." Mr. Benezet took leave of Louisa at Mrs. Clarandel's door, impressed with a very favourable opinion of her disposition, and highly pleased that he had, in her, raised up a friend to the distressed family.

Miss Unwin found, upon enquiry, that her cousin had not forgotten her promise; and despatching a servant with the nourishing portion, she set out herself to purchase some clothing for the children. When she returned from this employment, her heart glowing with the sweet consciousness of having acted right, Mrs. Clarandel was at home; by whom she was informed of a long train of engagements. Louisa, in return, gave her an account of the scene which she had witnessed; and, by her pathetic description, interested Mrs.

Clarandel's feelings so much, that the latter gave orders for the poor woman being daily supplied with provision from the fragments of her plentiful table. Pleased with her success, Miss Unwin was in excellent spirits, and joined, with much vivacity, in her companion's remarks upon the company of the preceding night.

After dinner, Frederic came in, with an invitation from Mrs. Barclay for his sister, to meet Selina and himself that afternoon at her house. "Look in his face, Louisa," cried Mrs. Clarandel, "is it not the picture of good humour? and yet he is barbarously come to deprive me of your company to three routs which I have promised to appear at this evening." "Instead of three routs, I can only insure to her the society of three people," replied Frederic, smiling. "But Selina is very anxious to introduce her to Mrs. Barclay; and I

can tell you, my dear Louisa, the good quaker has formed very high expectations of Miss Dudley's friend, and the sister of your humble servant." "And she has conceived a high opinion of you, I presume, from your being the accepted lover of Miss Dudley," returned Louisa; "for I don't know what other claim you can have to her favour. But, seriously, I have a very great curiosity to see her: so, out of compassion to the numbers who might fall victims to my bright eyes this evening, if Mrs. Clarandel could spare me---" "You would accept the invitation," interrupted she. "Well, you have my free consent; and I dare say Mr. Benezet will be better pleased with your mode of spending the evening, than with mine." "Who is Mr. Benezet?" enquired Frederic, observing the arch smile with which Mrs. Clarandel spoke. "A young divine," answered she, "whom Louisa saw yes-

terdav for the first time. She was smitten with the tone of his voice, and I don't know what may be the consequence!" "I declare, positively," cried Louisa, "I will never give a favourable opinion of a gentleman again, if you are to draw from it such unwarrantable conclusions. But, if you will believe me, Frederic, Mrs. Clarandel's observations are prompted only by jealousy." "Indeed, I can hardly tell what to think of you both," observed he; "I fancy we are going to have a second edition of the rival queens!" "Oh, as for me," said Mrs. Clarandel, "I fall in love a hundred times a day, and own it! But Louisa is such a little hypocrite, she would make one believe that her bosom is filled with a piece of ice cut into the form of a heart! Talking of hearts, my dear Frederic, when will you bring your Selina to see me again? I am quite charmed with

her; and if I were half so perfect, I should think myself too good for this world." Frederic asked when she would be disengaged. "What a question to a woman of fashion and spirit!" replied Mrs. Clarandel: "I have at least twenty engagements upon my hands. But, to be serious, if you and Miss Dudley will fix a day, I will contrive to be at home in spite of the world."

Frederic hastened Louisa, and on their arrival at Mrs. Barclay's, they found Miss Dudley. "My dear Madam," said Frederic, presenting his sister to the quaker, "your kind invitation has saved Louisa from three routs this evening. Here she is, to return her acknowledgments." "Thou art welcome," replied the worthy woman, cordially taking her hand, "though, were it not for the company of thy brother and thy friend, I could not hope

to compensate thee for the loss of thy other amusements." "I have heard too much of Mrs. Barclay," answered Miss Unwin, "not to prefer the opportunity of cultivating her acquaintance to mere diversion." She then seated herself by Selina; and the two friends expressed their mutual pleasure at the meeting. Frederic related, in a humorous manner, what had passed concerning Mr. Benezet, calling upon his sister for an account of that gentleman. She gave his history, as she had heard it from Mrs. Clarandel; then told them of the visit which she had paid, with him, to the wretched abode of poverty and disease. "Numberless are the scenes of the like nature in this great city," observed Mrs. Barclay; "but few there be who will take the trouble to seek them out: yet nothing so much improveth the heart, or correcteth that selfishness which an uninterrupted course

of prosperity is apt to create. Would our great ones witness the calamities which spring from unbounded luxury, it would surely check their thoughtless career, and inspire them with sympathy for the miseries of their fellow-creatures." "Those who have once entered, with avidity, into the pursuit of pleasure," said Frederic, "who think 'one moment unamus'd, a misery not made for feeble man,' are little likely to correct themselves by seeking the dwellings of affliction. But I trust there are many, high in rank, who have withstood, and still withstand, the torrent of dissipation; who look upon this world's goods as but a delegated blessing for the benefit of others; and who employ, not only their money, but their time and thoughts, in alleviating the sufferings which they do not refuse to witness." "We are apt, I believe," remarked Selina, "to impute less me-

rit to the great than they really possess. Virtue holds on its silent course, 'blessing and blessed,' without rendering itself conspicuous; whereas folly and vice, in an exalted rank, are sure to become public, and, perhaps, are held out by flatterers as examples worthy of imitation." "At least," added Louisa, "it is not altogether from flattery, that more praise is bestowed on piety and virtue, in high life, than in the middling ranks: for surely, where there is the most temptation to overcome, there must be the most merit in resistance." "I admire the candour of ye all," said Mrs. Barclay: it is indeed too much the fashion of the age to detract from the worth of superior station; but, though the *friends* are professedly adverse to the distinctions of a vain world, I am far from desiring to countenance the enemies of social order, whose only motive for wishing to level rank and

riches, is, that they may themselves rise upon the ruins."

The conversation was here interrupted by the entrance of tea: after which, the ladies producing their work, Mrs. Barclay requested Frederic to read to them. He took up Pope's Poems, saying, "In a party of ladies, I think the 'Epistle on Woman' will be very appropriate." "I hope you do not mean to bring upon you the vengeance of the sex, by adopting the author's sentiments for your own," observed his sister. "He dare not say so, at least in the present company," cried Miss Dudley. "For my part, I can readily forgive Pope all that he has said against women when he *meant* to abuse them, but I can never pardon what he intended for a panegyric. In my opinion, it is a more severe satire on the sex than can be produced from the whole of his other writings." Frederic begged to hear her

reasons. "Why," replied she, with animation, "can any thing imply a more thorough contempt for women in general, than supposing it a *singular* merit in her who

> "Can love a *sister's* charms, and hear
> "Sighs for a *daughter* with unwounded ear?"

"I agree with you most cordially, my dear Selina," said Miss Unwin; "and I will venture to assert, that freedom from envy is no uncommon quality in our sex. If I thought otherwise, I must fancy myself possessed of superior virtue; for I declare, that, feeling for you the affection of a sister, I not only love your charms, but love you the better for them: not Frederic himself, I am ready to aver, can take more pride in your beauty." "I believe thee, my young friend," observed Mrs. Barclay; "and I believe, too, that had the heart

of Pope been as pure as thine, his opinion of human nature would have been more favourable. Though the candour which can love merit in one who *may* be a rival, is always amiable,—yet, I trust, it is by no means uncommon." "But so far am I from thinking that woman superior to her sex," cried Selina, "who can 'hear sighs for a *daughter* with unwounded ear,' that she who *cannot*, I should degrade much beneath the common level." The quaker turned aside her head, to conceal ill-repressed emotion. The action did not escape the notice of Miss Dudley, who feared that she had revived in her memory some former affliction; but delicacy forbade the enquiry that rose to her lips. Frederic remarked, in extenuation of Pope's offences, that, in his days, the minds of ladies were not so much cultivated as at present; so they might, possibly, be more open to the impres-

sions of vanity, and the love of admiration. "Oh, he was a wicked wasp!" replied Louisa, "as Lady Wortly Montague wrathfully called him; though, perhaps, she had no just cause to complain of the malice which she had provoked." "It seems to me," resumed Selina, "that the satirists of our sex can usually find nothing to charge us with, but what is equally applicable to human nature in general. There are many women, trifling, vain, envious, gossipping; but so, also, are many men: and if we exceed them in folly, they go beyond us in vice. I leave it to an impartial judgment to determine which has the advantage." "I am afraid," answered Mrs. Barclay, (who had recovered her composure), "that such impartial judgment will not easily be found, unless we could obtain the opinion of a superior order of beings; since neither men nor women, as par-

ties concerned, are competent to decide the question. We, however, may be perfectly satisfied with this reflection, that, in the grand interest of the human race, in the hope of eternal salvation, our Almighty Father hath placed the two sexes upon a perfect equality. By the customs of the world, the disposition best adapted to Christianity is more encouraged in women than in men; and we may well put this in the balance against their advantages, if they have any, in temporal pleasures."

"My dear Madam," replied Selina, "you have placed the subject in the best light possible. And now, Frederic, instead of satire, let us have a little good sense out of Dr. Beattie's 'Essay on Truth.'" Frederic complied with her request, and the ladies listened with conviction and delight, to the perspicuous and forcible reasoning of that excellent author. Thus pleasant-

ly passed the time; and when Louisa took her leave, she received a cordial invitation from Mrs. Barclay to repeat her visit.

CHAP. VIII.

" Domestic happiness! thou only bliss
" Of Paradise that hast survived the fall!
" Tho' few now taste thee unimpair'd and pure,
" Or tasting, long enjoy thee; too infirm
" Or too incautious to preserve thy sweets
" Unmix'd with drops of bitter, which neglect
" Or temper sheds into thy crystal cup."

COWPER.

" And she was mine; and I was—was most blest—
" Gay title of the deepest misery!" YOUNG.

WHEN Mrs. Clarandel and Louisa entered the breakfast room, the next morning, they found a letter for each lying on the table. " From my dear

father!" cried Louisa, eagerly breaking the seal, and her attention was too much engrossed by the contents to observe that Mrs. Clarandel sat down with her's in her hand, apparently undetermined whether to read it or put it in her pocket. "My brother William is going to Portugal!" exclaimed Miss Unwin, in astonishment, with her eyes still fixed upon the letter: but receiving no answer, she looked up, and was painfully surprised to see that Mrs. Clarandel was in tears. "Dearest Madam!" she began,— "Ah Louisa," interrupted her cousin; "you have been used to view me in the character of the comic muse, till you have fancied that no other is either natural to me or becoming. You have yet known but one half of me; and if I did not greatly need the consolation of friendship, and had I not the firmest reliance on your discretion, you would never have known the other.

You shall now see me as I am: I have only to hope that you will not hate me! Indeed, indeed, much as I endeavour to drive away distressing thoughts, I am often very miserable!" and she burst into a fresh passion of tears. Miss Unwin, extremely shocked, did every thing in her power to comfort her, with the most soothing kindness: but, ignorant of the cause of her affliction she could only express her sympathy in general terms. At length Mrs. Clarandel, becoming more calm, held out to her the letter which she still had in her hand, bidding her read it: a request that Louisa could not comply with, as the hand writing was to her totally illegible. "Then I will read it to you," said she, "if you will first ring the bell, and give orders that we may not be interrupted by visitors; for I have a long story to relate." Louisa obeyed; and Mrs. Clarandel opening the letter, sat

with it some time in her hand, as if reluctant to begin the task which she had voluntarily prescribed herself. Louisa saw her irresolution, and, in the most affectionate terms, intreated her to be silent: she wished for no explanation, and would much rather forget all that had passed than give her a moment's pain. "You are a generous girl! Louisa," she replied; "but no, if I do not now tell you the whole, you will, perhaps, think me worse than I am. This is a letter from my daughter's governess." "Your daughter! Madam," cried Miss Unwin, with unfeigned surprise—but she checked herself lest she should wound the feelings of her friend. "You may well be astonished," proceeded Mrs. Clarandel: "of the numbers to whom I am known in the fashionable world, I believe and hope that not one is acquainted with this circumstance in my history. Yet, my dear girl, this daugh-

ter was not the child of shame: she was born in India, and Mr. Clarandel never entertained a doubt of her being his: indeed the manner in which he provided for her proved that point most decidedly. But you will hardly believe that he left me the fortune which I enjoy, upon condition that I should never see her from the time of his death, till she attained the age of eighteen." "What could be his motive?" enquired Miss Unwin. "Ah, my love!" replied Mrs. Clarandel, with a trait of her usual flippancy; "you do not know what odd mortals there are in the world! and I verily believe my dear disagreeable old man was one of the oddest. Taking it into his head that I was not fit for the trust, he rather chose to commit her to the care of strangers than to that of her own mother. Had he acted otherwise, such a precious charge might have made the most desirable alteration in my cha-

racter; for surely that mother must be strangely deficient in tenderness, who could wilfully set a bad example to her daughter! Regret, however, is vain: that chance for my reformation was not permitted! my inhuman husband tore the sweet cherub from me when she was little more than three years old!"

Here Mrs. Clarandel wept again; but, with a resolute effort, she checked her feelings and continued: "Indeed, Louisa, she was a beautiful engaging child; and was just come to the most entertaining age! Had my tyrant spared her to my entreaties, I do think she would have filled up the void in my heart, and put a stop to my seeking the gratification of vanity instead of the enjoyment of affection. Oh, my dear cousin, while you live, never marry a man whom you cannot love! But I will endeavour to be more methodical, and, by giving you my history, trace

out the causes of my life's misfortune.

"I went to India, as you know, when but sixteen. Wild with health and elated by vanity, I scarcely knew that I had a heart. All my wish was unbounded admiration, and I was not a little flattered by the offer of Mr. Clarandel's hand; he being one of the first persons, next to the Governor, in Calcutta. It is true he was thirty years older than myself, and might have contested the honour of being president of the ugly club with Esop or Scarron; but I thought only of his wealth and rank: and let me tell you the latter, where precedency is so much considered, is no small temptation to a woman. Well, my marriage was the signal for balls and every kind of gaiety, and I engaged in them with avidity. My husband lent his approbation during the honey moon; but, at length, looking for domestic comfort, he wished me to be less de-

voted to dissipation. Thoughtless as I was, I imagined that I could not find comfort in his society! my taste being vitiated, I could enjoy no pleasure without the seasoning of flattery; and people were not wanting to persuade me that I should do an injury to the world if I sacrificed it to the happiness of a husband. Abroad I met with admiration, at home with reproof: you may easily guess which was most agreeable—the consequence was that I was seldom at home, except to receive company. Perhaps if Clarandel had borne with my follies, (which were truly those of childhood,) and made himself pleasant by good humour, I might, in time, have tired of my pursuits, and sought for happiness in my own house: but a snarling old man was a companion little suited to my taste. Though, in candour, I must acknowledge that it was my conduct, probably, which made him

what he was; for I fear that I was too apt to laugh at his mildest and most reasonable remonstrances.

"Oh, that I could recal the past! Little did I think of the danger of defying the power of a husband; or what a gulf of misery I was preparing for myself! Thus we went on, Louisa; he complaining, and I spurning at every restraint; till, after five years, I found myself likely to become a mother. He was pleased with the event; for he had been anxious for children, and hoped that it would render me more domestic: I was far otherwise; having so habituated myself to a certain routine of amusements that I could not bear the thought of being interrupted in my pursuits. I was, however, so much indisposed, that I was obliged, in some measure, to give them up; but Clarandel did not gain much by the change. Never having cultivated his good opi-

nion, I had now fallen so low in his esteem, that to his other torments were added the pangs of jealousy: the object his own nephew, who was little more than a boy, and had resided with us from the time of our marriage. Indignant at the suspicion, which was totally unfounded, I disdained to remove his doubts by any alteration in my conduct. Indeed, Louisa, I am afraid that I wickedly took delight in teasing him; but I might as safely have provoked a lion, as I have since severely experienced. The young man was sent up the country, and the joy expressed by him at obtaining a desirable situation, set his uncle's mind at rest on his account. His removal, however, caused but a temporary peace between us: for, looking upon my husband as a jealous tyrant, I almost made my character dubious in the eyes of the world, by the delight which I took in keeping him

in a perpetual state of irritation. Do not shake your head, dear Louisa! I know that I was dreadfully wrong! I might, in relating my own story, have palliated my faults; but I tell you the truth; and conjure you to believe that I never was what *the world* calls criminal. Before another tribunal indeed, —but, be that as it may, I have been severely punished. I made Clarandel miserable while he lived, and he did what he could to make me so after his death:—I do not like to dwell upon this part of my history. My little girl was born; and, till I was able to go out, I felt a mother's joys. Had I sooner experienced them what a difference it might have made in my life! but the die was now cast; I had fixed my fate, and was too decidedly at variance with my husband to find peace, much less happiness, at home. Putting my child under the care of a faithful

Hindoo nurse, I was again to be seen at every place of fashionable resort: yet I was less dissipated than before. As my little Augusta grew entertaining, she often kept me part of the morning in my dressing room; and when she began to run about and prattle, I could, indeed I could, have become quite a tame, domestic animal, had I received the least encouragement from my husband. Alas, his good opinion was irrecoverably lost! lost, I cannot but acknowledge, by my own folly! The love that he once bore me was, I verily believe, turned into the most irreconcileable hatred! There was no place left for repentance, though I sought it even with tears: the endeavour only widened the breach between us, driving me once again from my home. I was then little more than three-and-twenty; surely he need not have despaired of my reformation! But I have no doubt

that he was, even then, meditating the cruel blow, which was to put an end to the only satisfactory enjoyment which I had known since my arrival in India. About a twelvemonth after this, Mr. Clarandel's health declined: he fell into a lingering illness, and was advised by his physicians to seek relief in his native climate. He accordingly made preparations, by settling his affairs, and remitted the whole of his property to England. When we set sail my little darling was nearly three years old. She was an universal favourite on board the ship; and the love her father felt for her was the only circumstance in which we agreed. I idolized her so much that I was never easy when she was out of my sight: yet, even when I have been amusing her with little stories, as she sat on my knee, I have felt an undefinable sort of terror at the looks which her father cast towards us:

and, though I had no presentiment of his designs, I dreaded that I should feel some sad effects of his enmity. My husband gradually grew worse, so that I sometimes thought he would not reach England alive: he seemed very anxious to do so; often saying that if he could but be able to support travelling for a few days after we landed, it was all that he wished. Our making the coast appeared to revive him; and, after being kept off for a few days by contrary winds, we arrived at Portsmouth. I was impatient to reach London, where Clarandel had, by means of his agent, already engaged a house; but he told me that he had an old friend in that part of the country, whom he wished to visit, and should therefore procure lodgings for a week. We went to them that evening; when he was, apparently, so overcome with fatigue, that I thought him almost at the point of death.

Judge, then, what was my surprise to find, when I arose the next morning, that he had set out in a post chaise two hours before! taking no one with him, not even his confidential servant. I concluded that he was gone to see his friend; but when night came, and he did not return, I was seriously uneasy. After what I have said, my dear Louisa, it would be ridiculous to assert that my anxiety sprung from attachment to him; but common humanity made me solicitous for a man in so deplorable a state of health. I had little rest; and, the next morning, the endearments of my prattling cherub could hardly call off my thoughts from her father. Had I loved him, I do not believe I could have felt more rejoiced than I did at his return. He looked ghastly. I held out my hand to him in the most affectionate manner, saying, "Your little darling and I almost feared that you

had forsaken us: indeed I have been very uneasy!" "On my account, Madam, no doubt!" replied he, in the most sarcastic tone; and throwing himself into a chair, he told the servant who waited at table to send up his own man, for he wished to go to bed. I was thoroughly chilled; and did not venture to ask any questions about his journey. After dinner I sent for his valet to enquire concerning Mr. Clarandel, but the man was gone for a physician, and, on his return, told me that he thought his master could hardly live till morning. I bade him let me see Dr. Mackenzie before he left the house. That gentleman waited upon me, appearing humanely interested for my situation, and informed me, in the most cautious manner, that my husband could not live many days; of which he himself appeared perfectly sensible. That he had, at his own request, ordered

him some cordial medicines, as his chief wish was to keep up a little strength till he had settled his affairs. After the physician left me I sent up a note to Clarandel, stating my desire to attend upon him and offer him every service in my power. He returned me a verbal answer that he begged to be left in peace: I need not fear but he would provide for me as became his wife!

"Oh, Louisa, how mortifying! Whatever were my faults, dissimulation from interested motives was not among the number; and my conduct arose entirely from his approaching death having extinguished all resentment in my bosom. That evening a solicitor arrived from town, accompanied by Mr. Nares, a merchant, with whom, and his brother in the same firm, my husband had always transacted business. These gentlemen were shut up with him till late at night, and went away without my seeing

them. Upon enquiry I found that they were to sleep at an inn and return to him in the morning: I also heard that he was not worse, but rather revived. The next day the gentlemen were again with him, and, upon leaving his apartment, paid me a visit in the drawing-room. Mr. Nares informed me that my husband had executed his will, and placed it in his hands; adding that I was handsomely provided for, and the child also. He told me, at the same time, that Mr. Clarandel had requested them to defer their return to town till the next day, as he apprehended that he should not survive the night, and it was desirable that his executors should be on the spot. "You will then dine with me, Gentlemen," I replied; to which they answered that Mr. Clarandel had invited them so to do. There was a coldness in their manner which led me to conclude that

they had been prejudiced against me; and consequently, feeling embarrassed in their presence, I was relieved by their proposing to take a walk round the town till dinner. I had kept my little girl with me the whole morning: I felt uncommonly low-spirited, and, though her caresses soothed me, I could hardly look at her without tears. A presentiment of evil hung over me, though I knew not what to dread! I had been some time expecting the faithful Hindoo, for my darling to take a walk, and every moment of her delay appeared to me a reprieve. At length she came, when, to my utter astonishment, she informed me that she had not come sooner in consequence of her master's orders, he having sent down twice, while the gentlemen were with him, to desire her to wait till they were gone. That immediately upon their quitting him he had taken a cordial,

and, in spite of the remonstrances of his attendants, insisted upon being dressed. The air, he said, would do him good, and, as he looked upon it as the last time, he had set his heart upon walking to the end of the street with his little girl. I felt thunderstruck! my head seemed in a whirl! and, incapable of coming to any determination, I suffered the nurse to put on the dear child's bonnet and cloak, while I stared at them like one stupified. But when she told her to say "Good by, Mamma," I burst into tears, and almost smothering my Augusta with kisses, was going to declare that I could not part with her, when Clarandel's valet came in, saying his master was at the door and could not wait. "You are going with her, surely?" said I to Mina, who was already equipped to attend her little charge. She seemed surprised at the question, which she answered in the

affirmative, and recollecting that my behaviour must appear very extraordinary, I suffered them to depart. Looking out of the window, I saw the nurse leading the child on one side and her father on the other. He tottered as if scarcely able to support himself, but was talking cheerfully to the sweet girl, who, delighted with his kindness, said, "I do so love to walk with you, papa." Oh, my dear Louisa! I have a painful pleasure in dwelling upon this scene! It was the last time, 'twas the last! that either my eyes beheld her, or my ears listened to her lisping accents!" Mrs. Clarandel paused in agony, and Miss Unwin, too much affected to speak, pressed her hand in silence.

Having indulged her grief, she proceeded thus: "In about five minutes Mina returned alone. I saw her pass, and running out, enquired why she had come back without th child. She

told me that her master had sent her for a letter out of his room, which he wished to put into the post-office at the end of the street, and that she had left him sitting in the shop, as he was too much tired to come back without resting. I bade her make all the haste she could; but she staid so long up stairs that, quite impatient, I followed to assist in the search: it was in vain; no letter was to be found; and, I dare say, she was ten minutes in the house before she returned to her master. I stood at the window anxiously watching their approach. At length I saw them, she supporting with difficulty his feeble footsteps; but my child was not with them. My heart sunk within me! yet I hoped that Augusta had only remained behind, because Mina could not take care of her while she assisted her father. Mr. Clarandel fainted as soon as he entered the house:

two of the men servants carried him to his apartment, and the physician was immediately sent for. The moment I could speak to the nurse, I enquired anxiously after my darling. She had not seen her, having met her master half way along the street, who, upon her offering to pass him to fetch the child, had begged her to lend him her arm, for he was almost dying. She supposed that, finding himself worse, he had left the little girl in the shop. "Surely Ma'am," added she, "it was almost madness in him to think of going out in such a state; yet, though Mr. James entreated to go with him he would not consent." I had hardly patience to hear her out before I sent her back for my treasure. Every moment appeared an age till she returned: and it was long, indeed, before I saw her repass the window, slowly, in tears, and, O God! alone. She entered the parlour

sobbing and almost in hysterics. I stood like a statue!—I could not weep—I dreaded to ask a question. I felt a vague wish to remain in suspense—every thing was preferable to the horrid certainty! At length she screamed out, "Your child is gone! The little innocent was conveyed away by its father!" I heard no more, but sunk upon the ground in a temporary suspension of misery. The physician, who was in the house, was called down, and when I awoke to suffering, he was the first person on whom I cast my eyes. Is Mr. Clarandel alive, sir?" said I: "has he recovered his senses?" "He has, my dear madam," replied he; "though I fear his imprudent excursion, this morning, will hasten his end. I am sorry to add to your grief, but I do not think he can live till night." "Then there is no time to be lost!" I exclaimed; and rushing up stairs, I

threw myself on my knees by my husband's bed side. Oh Louisa! my prayers, my tears, my agonies made no impression upon his flinty heart! I told him that if he would but restore my Augusta, I would live in constant retirement—I would dedicate my whole time to her—I would give a bond to do every thing he wished, upon forfeiture of my whole fortune! Dying as he was, he told me sternly, that it was pity I had not paid as much attention to the duties of a wife, as I was now willing to do to those of a mother. That he meant the forfeiture of my fortune should follow a non-compliance with his wishes, and his wishes were, that my child should be saved from the contagion of her mother's follies. He had desired to live only till it was in his power to place her out of my reach. In utter despair, I rent the air with my screams, and he ordered the

attendants to force me out of the room. Barbarian as he was, I hope his cruelty was forgiven him! He died that night.

As for me, I was put to bed in a delirious fever, from which I did not recover for many weeks. Dr. Mackenzie attended me, not only with skill, but with the most humane solicitude. When my senses were restored, my first enquiries were after my lost child's Hindoo nurse; but the doctor would not suffer me to see her, till I had regained a greater degree of strength. He had himself learned every particular from her, and from the executors; and considerably hastened my convalescence, by informing me, that it had not been Mr. Clarandel's intention to separate me from my daughter for ever. At length this faithful attendant was permitted to visit me. She entered the room with a cry of joy, and then burst into tears. It was nearly too much for

me; but upon Dr. M. threatening that she should not see me again, she became more composed. She, poor woman, had suffered greatly; for she was as much attached to her little nursling as if it had been her own.

When the physician left us, I could not procure an answer to my questions till she had vented her feelings in abusing her master, and complaining of the doctor for keeping her from waiting on her dear mistress. She then told me, that on asking for the child at the post-office, they had informed her, that Mr. Clarandel, immediately after she went, left the shop with his little girl: they saw him turn the corner of the street, but they had not observed him pass again without her. She made enquiries, of several people, in the direction pointed out; and, at last, was told by a woman, who kept a vegetable stall, that she had seen such a gentleman and child

as she described, come up to a post-chaise that was waiting at the side of the pavement. There was a lady in the chaise, to whom he said, "I'm afraid I've kept you waiting a long time." The woman did not hear the answer, but the door was opened, and he asked the little girl if she would not like to take a ride in that pretty carriage; to which she replied, "You come, too, papa?" He said, presently; he was too much tired then, but the lady had something nice to give her. He kissed her, and put her in; she saw the lady give her some cakes, and the chaise immediately drove away. This was all Mina could learn. She declared it made her almost distracted; so that it was some time before she could resolve to return home and acquaint me with the intelligence. I had, now, no doubt that the motive of Clarandel's extraordinary journey, was to seek a situation

for his daughter: and so impenetrable was the mystery, from his going alone, that I had no hope of gaining any information except from his executors. Dr. Mackenzie truly pitied me, and had, I believe, done much towards removing the prejudices infused by my husband into his friends. Upon consulting with him, he offered to write to Mr. Nares to send me an attested copy of the will; as I should see by that what he could or could not do to further my wishes, and I might afterwards apply to him by letter, or in person upon the subject. The will was sent; by which I found, that Clarandel had bequeathed me a very handsome jointure, upon the conditions which I mentioned before. If I incurred the forfeiture, it was to go to a distant relation, in whom it was to center at my death. Mr. Nares and his brother were my trustees; they were also the

guardians of my daughter, to whom was left three thousand a year. This income was to be hers at the age of eighteen, and the principal when she was twenty-one; provided that she did not, before that time, marry without the consent of her guardians. If she did, the principal was to go to another relation of Mr. Clarandel, and she was to have the interest only for her life; but, in either case, she was to be put in possession of the fund which had accumulated during her minority. The will further directed, that she should remain in the place which her father had chosen for her till she attained the age of eighteen; when her guardians were at liberty to acquaint me where she was, and she might select her place of residence; but, till then, they were to keep her in ignorance that she had any natural connections. One of them was to visit her once a year, to enquire if

she were in health, and properly taken care of; but they were not to make themselves known to her, and only to see her at a distance. Two hundred pounds a year was the allowance to the lady in whose charge she was. A handsome estate in the west of England was left to the Mr. Nares', provided they fulfilled the injunctions of the will; otherwise, it was to go to the solicitor, who was joint executor with the elder Mr. Nares. This was my husband's testament, my dear Louisa, and surely a more extraordinary one was never registered. To gratify the resentment which my imprudence had raised, he left his only child, for the first years of her life, literally an outcast upon the earth. I wept plentifully over this monument of Clarandel's hatred, and then wrote to Mr. Nares, entreating to be permitted to see my daughter, if only at a distance and once a year. This, I

thought, might be effected in secrecy, without his incurring the penalty. He answered my letter in very kind and sympathizing terms; but told me, that he was prevented from complying with my request, not only by the conditions of the will, but by the most solemn promises exacted from him by my husband. All that I could obtain, after repeated application, was a permission, that the governess should, twice a year, write me an account of my Augusta; enclosing the letter to Mr. Nares, and giving no date or name. I will now read you the one I received this morning.

"Madam,

"I have the pleasure to inform you, that Miss Clarandel improves every day. Her attention to the different branches of her education is unremitting; and she promises fairly to be a most esti-

mable character. Her health is good, as it has been almost uniformly since she has been under my care. She approaches fast to maturity, and is generally thought to possess great beauty. That you may be satisfied with the pains which I have taken for her improvement, is the sincere wish of, Madam, Your's, &c."

"How short!" cried Miss Unwin. "They are all in the same concise strain," replied Mrs. Clarandel. "Oh, how it would delight me to see three pages full of intelligence of my child! Yet even this is a comfort, though every letter renews my grief at our separation." Louisa had often, during the narrative, expressed her sympathy by her tears, and now most feelingly condoled with her friend. She thought her blameable, but almost lost the sense of her faults in the commiseration in-

spired by their severe punishment. She asked what had become of the Hindoo. Mrs. Clarandel answered, that, by her own desire, she had sent her back to India by the first ship which sailed after her recovery. She then added: "I'm afraid I have tired you, Louisa." Upon being assured, that she had not, she continued: "By Dr. Mackenzie's advice, I went into Devonshire for the remainder of the winter. Indeed I wished to fly from every body who knew me; and, supposing that all who heard my story, would think I deserved my fate, I was anxious to keep the transactions relative to my daughter a profound secret. I therefore discharged all Mr. Clarandel's servants, retaining only my own woman, of whose fidelity I was assured, and hired others at Exeter; in the vicinity of which place I engaged a cottage. In the spring, I made an excursion to the lakes, and

spent the summer in Wales: till time having softened my grief, I took possession, the following winter, of this house, which is part of my jointure.

Few among the circle of acquaintance into which I now entered, knew any thing of my previous history, further than that I was the widow of a rich East Indian. The Mr. Nares' and the other executor readily entered into my views: from the governess there was no fear, as secrecy was the condition on which she retainnd so profitable a charge. To the enquiries made after my child by my friends abroad, I briefly replied, that I lost her soon after my landing in England." "But," interrupted Louisa, "how do you mean to act, when your daughter's age will authorize you to acknowledge her as your own?" "It is a point I have not yet settled," returned Mrs. Clarandel: "that period was then at a

great distance, and I fear I have always been in the habit of averting only the present evil. I must, however, consider of it; for it is now the beginning of March, and the first of June is my dear Augusta's birth-day. I have made up my mind to see her on that day, if it be possible; and her guardians are to be my escort. Oh, Louisa, my dear Louisa, what happiness will then be mine! It is true I don't know how I shall contrive to bring her out; but, perhaps, she will prefer living in retirement, and I am determined, that her wishes shall be my law. Then the world may talk as it pleases; my lovely girl will enable me to set it at defiance! I wonder whether she still retains any traces of what she was when I used to dote upon every turn of her expressive countenance!" After a little more conversation, the ladies separated.

Miss Unwin's thoughts dwelt upon the

narrative which she had heard, and she could hardly recover her astonishment at the new light in which she had seen Mrs. Clarandel. She recollected, that an engagement had been formed for the evening; but not imagining, after what had passed, that her friend would be inclined to fulfill it, she dressed herself accordingly. She was therefore surprised, when they met, to see her cousin prepared for visiting, and every trace of the morning's agitation banished from her countenance. "Why, Louisa," she exclaimed, "you are not attired for conquest! I suppose in mercy to Sir Henry Temple: surely you forget, that we are to be at Lady Clyfford's to-night!" Miss Unwin did not like to own the truth, as she feared it would imply a rebuke, and only said, that she was not inclined to go out, having a head-ache, so begged her permission to remain at home. "You are a little hy-

pocrite, Louisa," rejoined Mrs. Clarandel: "and I know you think, in your heart, that if I felt as much as I pretend, I should not be disposed to go out either." "Not so," replied Miss Unwin; "but, I confess, I thought it probable, that your spirits might not be equal to company." "Now that is honest, my dear girl. Yet the fact is, that the conversation I have had with you, has relieved my mind from such a weight of concealment, that I am inclined to view every thing in the brightest colours; and I have been amusing myself with fairy visions of the future, till I never felt more light of heart. But I have been very selfish in transferring the load from my breast to your's; for I am sure you will not mention what I have imparted, even to your friend, Miss Dudley. Miss Unwin assured her, that she would not; and then Mrs. Clarandel, by insisting,

that she only wished to stay at home in the hope of being visited by Mr. Benezet, prevailed upon her to alter her dress for the evening engagement. After dinner, Mrs. C. enquired concerning their friends at Heathdale, when Louisa informed her they were all well, and that her brother William was going to Portugal, to recover a legacy which had been left to her father by a gentleman of Lisbon, there being reason to think that the executors meant to withhold it, from the frequent subterfuges which they had used. Mrs. Clarandel expressed her hope, that William would succeed in the purpose of his voyage, and Miss Unwin wrote a note to Frederic, to acquaint him with the intelligence.

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